

Yuusha no Furi mo Raku Janai— Riyuu? Ore ga Kami dakara—

— Even Posing as a Hero is Easy--Why? Cause I'm a God —

- Volume 4 - Hero Village Management

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[Lyzo-Translations]

Chapter 71

The Royal Capital Industria

I became a hero and got the request from the king to subjugate Leo, who apparently was a companion of the demons who attacked the capital.

I made a deal with the dragon to help Leo, defeated Barrier Muuk of the Four Heavenly Kings at the World Tree and saved the elves, who in turn became my believers.

After that, I heard the truth about the Demon Lord from the Ocean Goddess Lilille. The Demon Lord turned out to be the alter ego of the god Vanus.

We erected a demon repelling barrier and departed the day after we had defeated Barrier Muuk.

We receive the farewells of the elves and head southwest.

What we'll do from now on is to find a skilled blacksmith, get the gems that are produced in the Edelstein Kingdom, and to create a holy sword.

And I have to acquire 50.000 believers.

For the time being, we're heading for the royal capital Industria.

It was a journey of about one week.

We mounted Sand Lizards and crossed the desert.

I, Celica, Minya, Lapisia and Fioria with her child are joined by the Ocean Goddess Lilille, who also goes by the name of Lily the saint.

Lilille rode a Sand Lizard together with Lapisia and was teaching her God Art along the way.

"Do you get this, Lapisia? You collect the energy of the earth and use it."

"Yup"

"It feels just like moving your arms and legs when you concentrate on the earth."

"Hm?"

"Try to do it as if you're sticking your hands into the ground and then grab it from below."

--Will this method really work?

While Lapisia rides on the Lizard's back, she wrinkles her eyebrows and shouts in a low voice.

"Grab!"

She pointed at the sand that we were passing by.

When she did this, it bulged by about ten centimeters.

That's all.

Lilille pats Lapisia's head.

"Good girl. Well done. Please practice this for a while, because this is the foundation."

"Yes"

Lapisia swung her blue twin tails and begun to practice it over and over.

Sand rises like guideposts here and there.

Is it easier to understand, if you get to know the usage of magical power with your body first?

The explanation is quite vague though.

Lilille is a dazzling beauty, but she also has a clumsy side to her. On a level, that might just let the world end.

I'm worried, whether she won't make a blunder.

--Ah, that's right, Lilille.

"What might it be?"

-- How do you feel about Rii's status?

"I've been carefully watching her for quite some time now, and I think, that there's indeed an abnormality with her race and age."

--So she wasn't an elf after all, huh. Is her age also wrong?

"The World Tree was cut down about 30 years ago and her age is 139. Even if we assume that her father was 20 when she was born, it wouldn't be consistent if he wouldn't have been at least 120 years old. Humans shouldn't live that long. Conversely, even the elves would suspect him if he'd be alive."

--I see--, something is strange. Her actual age should be more like 60 or 70.

"From her appearance, I'd say she's 13 or 14 years old though. I don't think, that we'll be able to figure out her original age, since the elves are quite ignorant towards the flow of time..."

--Well, can't you just overwrite it with the power of the Ocean God?

"Don't say unreasonable things. Let's update her status after we have further checked the wavelengths of her magic power and life force."

--I'll leave it at your discretion.

Speaking of which, Fioria and Rii are completely concealed by their robes to hide their identities as elves.

We did that to avoid unnecessary trouble.

We crossed the desert in three days and got onto a main road.

We sold the lizards at a town and bought horses.

We left the barren land behind us.

We travel along fenced fields and pastures. There are a lot of drought-resistant crops and it looks like stick farming is widely spread.

We reached the royal capital Industria about one week after our departure.

It's a big city in the southwest of the continent that faces the ocean.

Large ships are anchored at the port in the south and there are warehouses and

various workshops lined up along the coast.

There aren't only blacksmiths, but also woodworkers, weavers, dyeing masters and potters among others. Of course, there are also wholesale dealers.

It seems that raw materials are brought to this city, then processed and exported.

From the looks of it, it supports the many territories of the Fabrica Kingdom that were hit by the desertification and hence can't produce enough food.

We approached this city from the northern side.

Slums surrounded the high city walls. Even the slums alone are like a city themselves.

The people who live here are migrants and people, who work away from home. They are poor and can't live inside the walls.

That there have so many people gathered here means, that there are many jobs.

However, there was a dispute at the city wall's gate. The huge double-door of the gate it closed and a crowd has gathered.

A soldier speaks.

"I can't let you enter the city today because it's dangerous."

"Why!?" "I can't work if you won't let me in" "Let me pass!"

"No means no!"

More soldiers are coming as they thrust with their spears at the people and don't plan to let the people enter.

I approach them while I show the "Proof of Hero".

"I'm a hero. Did something happen?"

"What do you want!? --Ah, Hero-sama, you are the hero of the Daphnes Kingdom? Thank you for coming all the way! Welcome to Industria! At the moment, it's dangerous though because the workers are marching through the streets."

"Are they demonstrating or did they go on a strike?"

"Well, I guess so. Something along those lines."

I looked through the streets with "Clairvoyance".

Soldiers and inhabitants were glaring at each other on the main street. It seems that a lot of the inhabitants are craftsmen.

"We aren't slaves" "No tax increase" "Don't let us only make weapons"

I looked at their status in a hunch and there were a lot of blacksmiths.

--It would be troublesome if they'd get injured before I can solicit them.

"I got it. I'll put an end to this."

"Really, Hero-sama!?"

"Leave it to me-- Celica, you and the others will wait here. Please protect Fioria and Rii. Lily, you'll come with me!"

"All right"

A two meters tall man came forward after he pushed his way through the people.

He has short, red hair and a scar on his cheek. He has a sharp look in his eyes and a grim look on his face. Muscles are swelling under his tanned skin and he gives off the atmosphere of a long-standing adventurer.

Because of his rough appearance, the space around him quickly clears.

It was the disguised Lillie. She changed her appearance before I knew it.

It seems to be a magic, that lets you show a false image of yourself, called "Mirage Form".

"Eh, is this also one of your comrades..."

"That's right. We'll pass through the gate."

"We'll immediately open..."

"No need"

Lillie and I are pushing a double door of the massive iron gate.

Gii It opens while it makes a heavy sound.

The soldiers look in astonishment.

"What strength! The doors shouldn't open unless they are pushed by five people."

"I'm a hero after all."

Then the big man Lilille and I are entering through the gap in the opened gate.

We were in an industrial area just after we had passed the city wall.

Various workshops are standing side by side.

White smoke rises from the chimneys around us and the air is quite dusty.

We're rushing on the stone paved road that is stained with oil.

Our goal is the inside of the second city wall.

The second large gate appears after we ran for several hundreds of meters. Soldiers are standing watch.

We go through the gate with the same exchange as before.

This is the district where the ordinary citizens and craftsmen live.

Shops and houses are lined up.

However, there is no traffic.

Soldiers and a group of craftsmen were glaring at each other.

Voices of anger and boos are resounding.

The distance between them has shrunk compared to before and the atmosphere is explosive.

I kicked the ground and flew high above the ground. My clothes are fluttering.

Then I came out in front of the two groups. Lilille in her tall man appearance follows behind.

A soldier yells.

"Wh, Who the hell are you!"

I raise the "Proof of Hero" and show it around.

"I'm a hero. Both sides, stop your pointless quarrel."

""He, Hero-sama!""

The groups are quieting down like the ebbing tide.

Especially the craftsmen, who seem to have complaints, won't quiet down immediately.

I spoke to the craftsmen.

"You know, that you'll only get hurt and go to prison, if you continue with your strike like that, right? I'm a hero, and if you're troubled by something, you can talk to me. How about it?"

"Ye, Yes..." "I understand..." "I'm sorry"

The group of about 300 craftsmen is quickly scattering into the side roads and the alleys.

I turn to the soldiers.

"That's how it is. The demo is over. No one was hurt, so leave it at that."

"Yes, understood! As expected of you, Hero-sama! --Let's return, everyone!"

Following the shout of the captain, who led the soldiers, they swarmed back into the castle in the center of the city.

"E, Errr. Hero-sama. Please listen to us."

Two men came to my side. One was a master blacksmith with a sturdy body and the other was a merchant-like man.

"What happened? It looked like there were many blacksmiths."

I'm certain because I looked at them with "Truth Sight".

"The truth is, the country is trying to make us create weapons, armor and portable rations for a very low price."

"A, And moreover, lots of them! If they'd just wanted five or ten, we'd tolerate it, but because they ordered a thousand for way under value, we'll starve!"

"I see. You asked for a reasonable price, but they didn't accept, hence it turned into a strike and a demonstration. Am I right so far?"

"They want 1000 weapons by the end of this month. By the end of next month 4000. Also the same amount of armors and food."

"That's a lot"

"Some of us will certainly die. This isn't magic, who'd do something that reckless!?"

--It's as if they were preparing for a war.

What are they thinking?

Lilille speaks telepathically to me.

"It's almost like they are preparing for a war. Or do you think they make them for demon extermination?"

--I'd still prefer that.

The merchant-like man lowered his back and spoke.

"So, would you please help us?"

"Hmmm. I'll decide after I heard out the country, but-- I can try to negotiate about the price and quantity."

"Thank you very much, Hero-sama!"

At that time, the sound of hooves echoes from behind with a *pakapaka*.

When I turned my head, knights, who seemed to come from the castle, arrived on horses. A carriage is following behind them.

"I assume you are the hero? Hero-dono, we came to pass the message along, that his majesty King Ronheim wishes to meet you. Do you want to accept his invitation?"

"That's just right. I planned to meet him next. --Lily, join up with Celica and the others and find an inn."

"Yes"

The giant man Lilille nods with a grim face.

I parted ways with Lilille, got on the carriage and headed toward the castle.

Chapter 72

Puppet extermination!

The royal capital Industria is a city that is surrounded by three city walls.
The castle in its center is so gorgeous, that it actually looks more like a palace.
I was accompanied by knights and was guided into said royal palace.

The audience hall is on the palace's second floor.
It's a large room about the size of a gymnasium. A red carpet is spread out and there's a throne placed one step higher in the back. An elderly man is sitting on it.
Knights in full armor were standing side by side close to the walls.

I'll greet him courteously for now because I'm the hero of the Daphnes Kingdom.
"It is a pleasure to meet you, your majesty King Ronheim. I am the hero of the Daphnes Kingdom."

"Y, Y, You say, you're... a hero?"

--Hmm?

The king's behavior was somewhat strange.

[Status]

Name: Ronheim IV

Gender: Male

Age: 51

Race: Human

Job: King

Class: King Lv51

Attributes: "Earth"

State: Puppet Manipulation

--He is manipulated by someone.

Ronheim pointed at me with his trembling finger after he stood up from his throne.

"Th, this guy, he's an impostor! He's a spy from the Daphnes Kingdom! Arrest him!"

"I'm not a spy, I'm a real hero."

For the time being I tried to argue.

The knights, who were lined up at the walls, made rattling sounds and drew their swords.

"Prepare yourself!" "Give up!"

I avoid the swords of the knights one after another.

I pass through the knights, grab their wrists and let them crash into each other.

The knights are moving slowly in their heavy ceremony armor.

They were easier to deal with than children.

Then the large door to the audience hall opened and an important-looking man brought soldiers inside.

They are lightly dressed and are holding spears.

The important-looking man gives orders.

"The fake hero tried to kill his majesty King Ronheim! Kill him! Protect his majesty!"

They line up the spears and attack.

These are more troublesome.

Just to be sure, I use "Truth Sight" and look at the soldiers' status.

They should get cold feet in the face of an overwhelming opponent.

Hmm? There's a strange fellow... or rather, a Magic Doll. That's unexpected.

I draw my Tachi and murmur.

"--'Wind Blade Grant'"

I cut off the tips of the spears with my green glowing Tachi.

Well then, what should I do?

It seems that they aren't brainwashed or enticed, but just following orders.

In that case.

I casually cast a spell during the fight.

"Oh gentle breeze, become a curtain that blocks all waves-- 'Eight Crossings Boundary'"

An octagon with two superimposed squares was drawn under the king's feet.

The king is wrapped in a dazzling light.

The soldiers make a noise.

"Ki, King!" "Your majesty!" "Bastard, what have you done!"

"'What', huh? I only let him regain his sanity"

"What!?"

The king shakes his head after he fell onto the floor with his back. He touches his gray hair to smooth it down.

He raises his voice while he pulls a wry face.

"Everyone, be quiet! Lower your swords!"

The low, but well-projected voice lets you feel the dignity that was piled up over many years.

The knights and soldiers are catching their breaths and stand as if they were petrified.

I speak to him while holding my Tachi.

"Your majesty, how are you?"

"Well. I feel somewhat groggy. You are a hero? Thank you for curing my strange condition."

"It's not over yet, so please don't leave the barrier. The magic that manipulated you is still active."

"Manipulate, you say?"

I turned towards the door.

"Let's see. Hey, that old man with the short mustache! You're the one who manipulated him, right?"

It's the important-looking man, who brought in the knights. He's probably a minister. He was a Magic Doll.

The old man shouted.

"You failed to assassinate the king and now you're mocking me!? Where's your proof, you fake hero!?"

"Proof? Who are you to say that?"

"I am Gatro, the defense minister! Hurry up and kill that fake hero!"

"Heh"

I ran past the red carpet. Like the wind.

The stupefied soldiers can't react fast enough.

I run through them and behind Gatro.

"The proof is-- this!"

zann!

I swung my Tachi in one go from his head to his feet.

The minister's body splits and falls to both sides.

Springs and parts are scattering about.

His limbs still rattled for a while after they fell down onto the floor.

Of course, there was no blood.

Suddenly the atmosphere in the room shakes.

"Eh, it must be a lie..." "He's not human!?" "The minister was?" "Si, Since when"

I approach the king.

"Do you have a grasp on the situation with that?"

"Ye, Yes... who would've thought that Gatro wasn't human... I give you my thanks, Hero!"

"It seems that he was trying to set up a war with his position of the defense minister. It looks like he wanted to execute me as a spy and use it as justification to attack the Daphnes Kingdom."

"You might be right. The situation was dire."

"Also, the craftsmen were desperately complaining because he ordered a large quantity of goods for a really low price. They asked me to help them."

"Hmm, was that so. Certainly, I can somewhat recollect, that I gave him the permission... I'll do something about it immediately."

"Thank you very much. The craftsmen's displeasure should settle down with this."

"Our Fabrica Kingdom is protected by the strength of the craftsmen. Our country will fall to ruin if we don't cherish them. --Hero, please tell me your name."

"I'm Hero Keika"

"Keika, I sincerely apologize, that we pointed our swords at you-- Everyone! This man is a real hero! Burn his strength and sincerity, that let him see through the truth, into your hearts!"

""""Yes~!"""" "Hero Keika, Banzai!" "Thank you, Hero Keika-sama!"

Everyone present lowered their heads to me. Then they applauded.

After that, I passed a cloth, that was imbued with a magical reflection barrier to the king.

"Please always keep this close to your body. There's a chance, that you'll be manipulated again, so don't let go off it even if you're injured."

"I see. Not only did you save my country, you even take further measurements. This is the least I can do for you on short notice-- Chamberlain"

The king ordered an elderly man to bring a bag.

Inside it were two holy gold coins (10 million yen).

I lowered my head when I received it.

"Thank you very much, your majesty King Ronheim."

"No, this isn't sufficient by a large margin... is there anything else you want?"

"Let's see... I'd like to investigate as a hero since demons are involved. I'd like to join the search of Gatro's house."

"Such a selfless request!... Certainly, it'll be dangerous with just the soldiers. Keika-sama, I'm counting on you."

"Please leave it to me"

I lowered my head, stepped back from the king and left the palace accompanied by several soldiers.



The mansions of the aristocrats and senior officials were located around the royal palace.

I arrive at Gatro's house, which is already surrounded by soldiers.

A girl with flowing blond hair approached me. And behind her was a girl with cat ears, who was carrying a bag.

"Keika-sama, you're safe"

"Keika-oniichan. Thank goodness."

"Ah, everyone. Thanks for coming."

I called Celica, Minya and Lapisia beforehand. Since they are registered as my hero party, they were able to pass the city wall that surrounded the royal palace.

Lilille, Fioria and Rii are house-sitting at the inn.

The captain is approaching.

"Keika-sama. What shall we do? Should we attack first?"

I invoked "Clairvoyance" and "Truth Sight", and examined the house.

"Yes. You'll take control of the first and second floor, I'll investigate the basement."

"Understood-- Everyone, make arrangements! We'll attack!"

Along with the command, the soldiers forced their ways into the mansion.

We follow behind them.

We hurry to the basement.

When we got down the dark staircase, there was a workshop, and tools and machines were scattered about. It was about the size of two connected classrooms.

Hands and feet of dolls are stacked up at the walls.

But there wasn't anything outstanding when I looked at them with "Truth Sight". But there was something in the back.

"Celica, Minya, there are Magic Dolls in the corners of the room. Destroy them!"

"Yes!" "Understood"

Celica waved her red skirt as she turned around.

Minya's Miko clothes are fluttering as she follows behind. Her black tail is standing stiffly.

The two Magic Dolls are starting to move. They didn't have any hair nor faces yet.

"*haa!*"

Along with a loud scream, Celica thrusts her slender sword forward.

She slashes at the two legs of a Magic Doll and ice is immediately spreading. It stops moving under the Frozen Rapier's effect.

Minya, who ran past her, swung her kitchen knives that she held in both hands.

The neck and torso were cut and fell onto the floor.

"Don't be careless. You have to further destroy it because it will continue to move."

"Understood"

Minya follows up.

Celica turned to the other one.

--I guess I'm not needed.

I confidently entrusted this room to them.

The room in the back has the size of about 8 tatamis.

A large bird cage was installed in the corner of the room. It is as high as my waist.

But inside wasn't a bird, but someone who was about 30 centimeters tall.

She was about four heads tall and wore a red, pointy hat.

I looked at her status with "Truth Sight".

[Status]

Name: Haya

Gender: ?

Race: Small Fairykin

Job: Slave

Classes: Magic Tool Engineer Lv99 Fairy Magic Lv33

A Magic Tool Engineer can make tools with magical effects.

I was thinking, that ties to this fairy may be a great help when making the holy sword.

Haya looks bored while she swings on a swing. It was rusty and made creaking sounds.

She looked up to me with her round and cute eyes when I approached.

"Are you a human?"

"Don't worry, I'm a hero"

"Can you help me to get out?"

"Please help me as well when I've rescued you."

"--I feel the power of the princess. I'll do whatever I can."

She immediately trusted me because of the Fairy's Blessing.

She let me see into her small eyes and smiled.

I broke the cage and let her out.

She jumped into my chest and clung to me.

"Thank you~"

Pretty cute.

"Where is the slave crest?"

"It's here~"

She rolled her shirt up and showed her stomach.

A round magic circle is drawn there like a seal.

"Hm~. It seems that this will cause you pain if you leave the house."

"*hii*"

Haya is trembling. Her pointy hat is shaking.

"Let's leave the erasure for later. I'll only deactivate it for now."

I pushed several points with my fingertips to disable the slave crest.

"My body got lighter"

"Very well. This looks good."

--I'll rely on Lilille later.

I left the room while carrying Haya.

The battle at the workshop was over.

"Minya, put her into your bag to hide her."

"Yes"

She moved her cat ears and put the bag down that she was carrying on her back.

Haya quickly understood and jumped onto the workbench.

"I'll take my tools along~"

"That should be for the best. But please hurry"

"Yeees"

She started to collect miniature hammers and pliers and put them in a sack.

It seems that she was indeed working here. It appeared, that the Magic Dolls were made by Haya.

Although she couldn't go against the orders, there is still a possibility that she would be charged for it.

I went ahead to prevent her from being taken into custody by the soldiers.

Haya shouldered her sack like Santa Claus and jumped into Minya's bag.

She slightly shows her face from the bag and speaks.

"Somehow, it smells like beasts."

"Well, we put materials in there. Please endure it."

"Yeees"

Minya silently takes the bag.

"Very well, let's go. Next is the second floor."

I said this while I looked at the ceiling.

The soldiers on the second floor were fighting against Magic Dolls and were struggling hard.

Chapter 73

Popularity-gains need proper preparations

We are inside the mansion of defense minister Gatro.

I, Celica, Lapisia and Minya are in that order climbing the stairs to the second floor.

"Minya, you'll protect the fairy. In exchange, Lapisia, you will... ah, you're still holding that egg. You should have given it to Lilille though."

Lapisia was carrying the egg with its white and black marble patterns.

"Today it's her turn to warm it. It's alright."

"Ah, okay then"

The sounds of attacking swords are resounding on the second floor.

The corridor is blocked by four heavily armed Magic Dolls.

The parts of already destroyed dolls were scattered on the floor.

I unsheathe my Tachi while I walk with big steps.

"Step aside. I'll take them down."

"He, Hero-sama! Please!"

The soldiers retreated to both sides.

I casually swing my Tachi while I pass by them.

zann!

I cut down a Magic Doll diagonally from the shoulders along with the armor. Moreover, I cut the doll next to it from bottom to top with the back swing.

""Oohh~!""

Voices of astonishment came from the soldiers.

Celica steps forward from my side.

"*Ya!*"

She releases a sharp thrust into a gap in the armor. The doll's movement became dull.
A soldier then smashes its head.

Lapisia steps forward while holding the egg and treads on the semi-broken doll to destroy it.

There was still one more left, but I quickly walked ahead.
My goal is the private room of minister Gatro.

The large room is sparsely furnished.
There is a shelf with alcohol and books at the wall.
There are a sofa and a table.
There are a desk and a drawer.

The drawer was sealed with locks and magic, but I forcibly opened it.
What came out from the inside were letters and documents.

When I looked through them, there were letters that seemed to deal with crime organizations.

He was fueling up a domestic crisis and did the war preparations to fill his own pockets from the budget.

He schemed quite a lot behind the scenes for that.

But it seems that he didn't intend to actually wage a war and only did the preparations.
--In other words, the original budget for the huge quantity of weapons and armors wasn't low, but he was probably embezzling the money.

Moreover, it seems, that excellent craftsmen are prohibited from leaving the country.
However, the technology can flow out of the country if the craftsmen are forced into

crime by putting the screws on them and then made into slaves.

The country and the criminal organization were working hand-in-hand.

Celica enters the room. She waves her skirt as she comes closer.

"What's the matter, Keika-sama?"

"Can Magic Dolls be made by humans?"

"They can make simple ones like the ones earlier. But only demons can make Magic Dolls that look like humans."

"I see"

Has the criminal organization of Gould switched the defense minister with a Magic Doll?

They probably prepared for a real war though.

It feels like the Demon Lord's breath is lurking behind them.

We left the mansion.

The captain rushes over.

"Thank you very much, Hero-sama! Thanks to you, the suppression went without any casualties."

"That's good to hear. Will you continue with the investigation after this?"

"Yes. It seems, that there is a connection to Gould and we found materials to make Magic Dolls in the basement. He probably planned to switch the important people in the country."

"Where is Gould?"

"We don't know that. He's hiding behind several layers of covers."

I was wondering what would happen if Haya was caught, so I asked.

"Do you know who made the dolls?"

"We don't know, but it seems that he possesses a dangerous technique. We'll probably immediately depose of him when he's found."

Minya's bag faintly shook. Haya seems to be frightened.

That was dangerous. I was right to save her beforehand.

"I see. Well then, I'll leave the rest to you. If something comes up-- hmm, Celica, where is our inn?"

"It's Merrill's inn on the main street in the second district."

"Ah, that place. Merrill's inn seems to have a good reputation. Hero-sama, I'll contact you there when the investigation is over and the report is ready."

The captain lowered his head and went back into the mansion.

We leisurely depart from the mansion.

Celica is walking beside me.

"I got gold coins from the king, please take them."

"Yes, Keika-sama."

I handed the two holy gold coins from the king over to Celica.

Celica puts them into the bag at her waist.

"Now then, what shall we do next?"

"You're not done yet?"

"I was thinking, that the destruction of the criminal organization should increase my popularity."

"That's true of course... but it seems that no one knows where it is."

"Investigation shouldn't be a problem now that we got a lot of money."

"Oh, you've already thought about your next steps. As expected of you, Keika-sama."

Minya speaks while she walks behind me

"If there is someone, who can do it, it's you, Keika-sama"

"Yeah, leave it to me. Minya, please walk diagonally in front of me. I want to talk to the fairy."

"Yes"

With a supple movement of her body, Minya walks a half step in front of me.

She straightens up her back and her pointed ears are standing up.

I loosen the opening of the bag on her back and peek inside.

"Haya, are you alright?"

"I feel like I've been eaten by a beast..."

"The smell of the materials, huh. Please endure it a little longer. Do you remember, when you were caught?"

"--It was about one year ago. I got caught with a net. All the other fairies were fleeing and hiding."

"Through which ways have you been sold?"

"I was on a ship. At first I was at a beautiful port town with red roofs and white walls. I had to make some dolls there."

"So you were at Doruas? And after that you came here? Hmm, that mayor's good-for-nothing son Jean might have also kept some other slaves."

He had demon slaves in the basement.

Which reminds me, I was told, that the inn at Doruas was made by craftsmen from Industria, but the letters stated, that excellent craftsmen basically can't go abroad under national law.

I sighed.

"I guess corruption is widely spread everywhere..."

"Yes, that's true. What do you intend to do?"

Celica's voice sounded saddened.

"The trail leads back to the Demon Lord, but for now I'll take down Gould. --I'll close the bag"

"Ah, yes~ I'll be waiting to be of use to you again--"

Haya spoke while I closed the bag.

"Minya, I want you to bring Lapisia to the inn. And please show Haya to Lily and ask her to remove the crest at her stomach."

""Understood-- let's go, Lapisia."

"Yup!"

They looked like sisters when they joined hands.

I was thinking as I walked.

It would be a waste to simply arrest Gould.

How can I get everyone's ovations for that?

I was thinking about the best way.



I went through the gate of the first city wall that surrounded the castle area and went to the second district.

Celica and I went to another place after we separated from Minya and Lapisia.

I was looking for the blacksmith guild in a back street.

It is a two-story building.

It gave off the impression, that it wasn't well maintained anymore for quite some time.

I was immediately sent through to the guild master's room when I showed my "Proof of Hero" at the reception.

A good-natured, middle-aged man welcomed us.

It was the man who I earlier met at the strike.

"Thank you for coming! Please take a seat-- Heey, please bring some tea!"

He calls out into the corridor in a loud voice.

We were guided to a sofa in the corner of the room.

I was sitting down side by side with Celica and we were facing the guild master.

The tea was brought immediately. There was hot tea inside a teacups.

The guild master spoke while we took a sip.

"So, how did it go?"

"I talked to the king whether he can do something about the issue. It seems that the defense minister went crazy and tried to start a war. It's alright now."

"Is that so? As expected of you, Hero-sama!"

"That should be settled then. Can I ask you a few things?"

"Of course, please ask me anything"

"Is there a place that deals with slaves?"

"Eh? Yes, there is. It's in the south of the workshop district, in a warehouse close to the harbor."

"I see, the harbor... I heard that craftsmen who committed crimes are made into slaves."

"Also craftsmen who can't pay the taxes. It's really awful."

I spoke as I looked at the guild master who had a serious look on his face.

"I agree. There's also a possibility that the craftsmen are on purpose made into slaves and taken away to leak technology to other countries."

"Wh, What was that?!! Is that true!?"

The guild master stood up with his eyes wide open.

"There is no proof yet, but the king should find out about the truth soon. That's why, if possible, please quickly let the guild members and other guilds know."

"Le, Leave it to me!... And, what do you plan to do, Hero-sama?"

"I'll go to the slave house. It might turn into a battle."

"Understood-- then, I'll inform the others immediately."

"Please do so--"

The guild master jumped out of the room before I even had finished talking.

--So, now I can deal with the slave house.

I'm certain that there is a connection to Gould.

At least I should find a clue.

Celica puts her hand at her mouth and softly laughs.

"He seems to be quite impatient"

"You're right."

"But he doesn't seem to be a bad person."

"Yeah, we can trust him. Shall we go as well?"

"Yes, Keika-sama"

We drunk up the tea and left the room.

We headed to the port in the south.

Chapter 74

Slave house raid!

The sunlight falls down on the royal capital Industria.

A dusty, salty wind is blowing at the port and many ships are landed. People and Golems are carrying wooden boxes with goods inside.

The warehouse district runs along the harbor.

The slave house lies slightly away from the main road where wagons loaded with wooden boxes were driving back and forth.

It is a luxurious looking building. It seems to be flourishing.

I looked at it with "Clairvoyance" and on the ground floor were the reception, a hall, a bath and offices. On the second floor were lots of small rooms rather than one big one and there were only women and boys.

The basement is deep. It's like a dungeon and there are many prison-like rooms.

There were also demons. With slavery status.

As expected. Might Jean's demon slaves have come from here as well?

I guess I could just rush through as a Hero.

--No, wait a sec.

The basements after the first floor aren't connected.

Is there some magical mechanism? That's a bother.

Maybe I should first observe it as an ordinary customer.

Strong guards are standing in front of the building's entrance.

"I'm sorry, dear customer. Do you have a membership card or a letter of introduction?"

"No, not really. Can I also use this?"

I showed the "Proof of Hero" to them.

"*Ugh*" The guards are catching their breaths.

"O, Of course, Hero-sama. Please go inside."

A beautiful lady with flaxen hair came to our side when we entered the building.

"Dear customer, this way please."

She started to walk in front of me.

A thick carpet is spread out in the corridor that we are walking through.

The pillars are carved and there are pictures at the walls. Beautifully dyed pots and sculptures are put around.

The corridor is showy and gives off a decadent atmosphere that let's you think of a high class brothel.

I was guided to a rectangular hall with three doors in the back.

As soon as I sat down on a chair, an elderly man who appeared to be a slave trader appeared. He came from the door in the middle.

A strong looking youth and an elderly man are following behind him.

The slave trader has a gentle smile, but his eyes are cold like ice.

"It is a pleasure to meet you, Hero-sama. How can I be of service to you?"

"Let's see... some beauties would be fitting. Please show me some that might be useful."

I spoke while I held Celica's thin shoulder, who gradually starts to blush and casts her eyes downward.

"Ke, Keika-sama. It's embarrassing."

"It might be rude to ask, but how much might your budget be?"

"Show me the two coins you got earlier."

"Yes, Keika-sama."

Celica opened the bag at her waist with her slim fingertips and placed the two gold coins in the palm of my hand.

The slave trader slowly nods as he smiles strongly.

"Yes, alright. I'll show you several slaves."

He claps, and the young man goes through the door to the left after he bowed.

I observe him with "Clairvoyance" and "Attentive Ears".

The left door is connected to the basement's first floor. There are pretty men and women and young boys and girls. There are also an ax wielding dogfolk and an elderly woman with a cane who is reading a book.

All of them are locked up in an ordinary room.

The young man examines them with his hand on his chin and finally chooses about ten people and leaves the room with them.

The young man speaks in the hallway.

"The customer is a hero, so make sure not to make any mistakes."

The slaves raised their voices in surprise with "*Oh~*" and "*Eh~*".

There is a mirror in the room with the stairs on the basement floor, letting everyone arrange their appearance.

It seemed that it will take some time.

I looked at the slave trader.

"At any rate, your business seems to be profitable."

"Yes, Industria is a manufacturing city after all. There are never enough hands."

"You should also be able to get skilled people here. But the only way to get them would probably be to abduct them I guess."

"What are you saying, Hero-sama. There are many conditional slaves."

"Conditional slaves?"

The slave trader raised his voice with an "*Ah*", clears his throat and corrects his posture.

"There are two kinds of slaves. People with good jobs and abilities are expensive and can make conditions when signing conditional slave contracts."

"Oh. For example?"

"Let's see. For example I have an elderly woman who is a Wizard. Her contract forbids corporal punishment, heavy labor and fighting. She only works four hours a day and has to rest three days a week. She's worth 40 big gold coins.

"Isn't that expensive?"

"However, she is superior in black magic and drug synthesis and the current court magician was a student of the old woman."

"I see, she's a professional tutor. There has to be a high demand."

"Yes. She has already been traded many times before she came here."

--Conditional slaves seem to be something like temporary workers.

So everyone in the first basement is a conditional slave?

That explains why they are not overly constrained.

"And the other type?"

"Those are unconditional slaves. They don't have any abilities or have been sold because they didn't pay back their debts."

"I see"

I looked at the basement again.

Many men and women were chained in collars on the basement's second floor. The women and girls were dressed in thin veils and wore captivating make-up. The men were chained at their hands and feet.

On the third floor were heavily constrained people. Some of them cried with "Let me go home". It seems that they have been abducted.

Moreover, there was also an elf and beastfolk. And even someone with a snake body-- a Naga.

--I'll be scolded by Ieturia later if I don't save her soon.

On the basement's fourth floor... are several rooms. There are office-like rooms and rooms that look like storerooms.

A skinny man enjoyed himself by tying up a fat orc in a bedroom.

He turned out to be Gould after I looked at his status.

--It looks like this place is the criminal organization's hideout.

I don't know how to get down there though.

The slaves might die from the collapsing earth and sand if I forced my way through the ground.

Meanwhile, the young man came back.

He took along the group of ten slaves.

The slaves were lined up at the wall.

The slave trader explains.

"That one is good at fighting, that one is good at magic, that one can search with thief skills, that one is skilled at making tools..."

He answered several questions.

As expected, all of them were conditional slaves.

"Well, they are definitely good, but the conditions are tough. I can't take them on adventures and travel around. I want a slave with a more loose condition."

Status-wise, no one of them was exceptional.

The slave trader speaks.

"I'm terribly sorry. I'll immediately bring some others..."

"*Clap Clap*" He clapped twice with his hands.

At the same time as the young man went to return the slaves, the silent old man headed toward the right door.

I follow him with "Clairvoyance". Of course, I also use "Attentive Ears".

The right room was empty. The old man crouched, took off his gloves and touched the floor.

Then, the floor shone in the colors of a rainbow and a high voice echoed.

"You can go to the basement's second or third floor. What is your destination?"

"Basement second floor"

"As you wish"

The inside of the room flickered like a mirage and the old man warped to the basement's second floor.

Nevertheless, I couldn't see magic circles inside the warping room.

I looked at the old man's hand with "Truth Sight".

[Fairy's Crest] Lets you go through Fairy Doors. Can't move you to the Fairy World. Can be used up to four times a day. (1 remaining)

So he used a fairy skill?

It seems to be like a warp zone.

I guess he enslaved a fairy.

But it makes sense. Gould wasn't found until now because he is hiding behind fairy magic that can't even be seen through with "Truth Sight".

Hmm, it doesn't look like I can go to the fourth floor.

Maybe I should save the slaves up to the third floor and then draw out the ceiling.

But, the old man's key can only be used four times a day with one time remaining. It can't be used anymore after he used it to return.

There might still be one or two other people though, because someone has to bring him his meals.

--Or, could I maybe use Fairy's Blessing as a substitute?

It might actually be a degraded version of Fairy's Blessing.

I guess I should ask.

Should I telepathically connect to Lilille and ask for Haya?... no, since I know the fairy's face and name, I can just talk to her directly.

I murmur the incantation of "In my name of Keika Hiko-no-Mikoto, who possesses the Fairy's Blessing~" etc. to ask Haya.

"Haya, can you hear me?"

"*Ah*, that surprised me! Yes, I can hear you."

"I'm currently at the slave house but it seems that there is a Fairy Door. Can I pass through it with Fairy's Blessing?"

"Yes~. Because you have the princess's divine protection, you can freely pass through Fairy Doors and even Fairy Gates. There isn't even an annual fee."

"Is the Fairy Door something like a warp device? I can't see it from the distance though."

"The actual device is in subspace. It activates when a person with permission touches the installation surface~."

So I can't use it unless I know where it is?... Alright. Ah, by the way, was the slave crest removed?"

"My stomach is now smooth and clean. Like the surface of a jewel."

"Then, please tell Minya and Lapisia, that they should hurry to the slave house. It is in the warehouse street at the port."

"Yes~"

I stood up from the chair and stretched my arms.

"Well then. I guess it's time to bring out the trash."

"Eh? What do you mea-- *gufuu!*"

I strongly punch the coldly smiling slave trader into his stomach.

He hits the wall and faints.

"Celica! Tie him up! Also his mouth!"

"--Yes, Keika-sama!"

Celica was slightly puzzled but immediately followed my order. She uses the slave trader's belt to tie him up and plugs his mouth.

The young man tries to escape.

I punch his head from behind. He collapsed onto the floor.

Celica comes over and ties him up in the same way.

I carried the slave trader and the young man to the right door.

Celica tilts her head.

"What are we going to do?"

"We'll save the slaves in the basement. Then we'll take down Gould. But first we'll neutralize the old man once he returns."

"Understood"

Celica nodded with a serious face. She has a dignified beauty.

The door opened after a while.

The old man brings five slaves.

"Sorry to keep you wai-- eh?"

I instantaneously moved and hit the old man's neck.

The old man collapsed with a dull sound.

The slaves are making noises.

I show the "Proof of Hero" to the slaves.

"I'm a hero. I have proof that this man is an underling of the Demon Lord. You'll also be treated as his underlings if you won't cooperate."

Well, the proof is in the basement and I don't have it yet though.

"Ye, Yes" "Understood, Hero-sama"

"Then, line up at this wall and say that we went to the room in the back for interviews if an employee comes."

"Understood"

The slaves obediently nodded.

Incidentally, I noticed that one of the five slaves was a craftsman.

He's a young man with black eyes and black hair. Although he's an unconditional slave, he holds his head high and has a gallant expression on his face. His eyes are shining with determination.

[Status]

Name: Melvius

Gender: Male

Age: 28

Race: Human

Job: Slave

Class: Architect Lv41 Magic Seal Master Blacksmith Lv5

Attributes: "Earth"

Oh. He has the Magic Seal Master Blacksmith skill.

I wonder how he became an architect though.

I talk to Melvius.

"Who are you? How did you become a slave?"

"I am Melvius. I needed money to cure my wife's illness. More than 30 big gold coins. That's it."

Melvius answers in a cool voice.

"Could she be cured if you had the money?"

"Yes. She needs a very rare medicine."

"Is that so-- Celica, give him a coin."

To my call, Celica took one holy gold coin out from the bag that was hanging at her waist.

"Here you go"

"Eh!?"

"Take it"

I spoke while I picked up the slave trader and his entourage.

I don't further care about Melvius for the moment.

He can't escape from the building because of the slave crest anyway.

I put the tied up slave traders into the room to the right.

Then I put my hands on the floor and it shone in the colors of a rainbow.

"You can go to the basement's second, third or fourth floor. What is your destination?"

"Basement third floor"

"As you wish"

The moment I was just thinking that the voice was quite shrill, I couldn't feel any gravity anymore.

Then we warped to the basement's third floor.

"Let's go, Celica. We'll save the people, the elf and the Naga who have been kidnapped."

"Yes,-- a Naga!?... Understood"

We leave the room and quickly run through the corridor.

First we save the humans.

There were the daughter of some noble and the son of a senior official. It looked like they weren't slaves but hostages.

They thanked me with "Thank you very much" and "Thank you, Hero-sama" while they were crying.

Then I rescued the elf.

A beautiful woman with green hair was chained up inside a room.

I bend the iron door open.

"Are you alright? I came to help"

"Yo, You are...?"

"I'm Hero Keika. I'm an acquaintance of the chieftain Jagd."

She began to cry with "*uuu*" the moment I mention Jagd's name.

"You can cry later. Let's escape."

"Ye, Yes... but, the chain..."

"No problem"

I approach in big steps, pull the chain, that is attached to the wall and teared off the collar.

The elf lowers her head many times over, causing her green hair to ripple.

"Thank you very much, Keika-sama!"

"Follow me"

"Yes!"

Now we headed to a room in the back.

Inside the small room was the Naga woman.

The Naga trembled with her whole body when I forcibly opened the door. Her huge breasts shook from side to side.

"Wh, Who are you?..."

"You know Dhalia or Ieturia?"

"...!! Why do you know the names of my comrades!?"

"I'm Keika. I'm a hero. Everyone is working enthusiastically at Doruas. Well, I'll get you out."

"...u, ugh!"

The Naga's beautiful face distorts as she spills tears.

I tear the chain off the wall.

"You can cry later. Let's flee for now."

"...Understood"

She wiped the tears with her hands, bent her snake body back and forth and went out into the corridor.

I took everyone and we returned to the first floor.

Chapter 75

Subjugating Gould!

I took the hostages, the elf and the Naga from the slave house's basement and returned to the hall.

Everyone is freaked out by the Naga's appearance but I don't care.

Then Minya entered the hall with Lapisia.

She carries the tied up guide woman on her shoulder.

Minya waves her Miko dress and comes to my side.

"Is this fine?"

"Yes, good thinking, Minya"

It seemed to feel good and her cat ears were briskly moving when I patted her black hair.

Lapisia approaches.

"What shall, we do?"

"Please watch over the slave traders until I'm back. Also keep an eye on the slaves, because it's possible that they might be ordered to attack by someone. Make them faint in that case."

"Yes! Hold back punch!"

"...well, I guess it's okay"

Her holding back is still on the level of a near death experience.

But I don't have the time for that at the moment.

"Well then, I'll pay a visit to the mastermind-- Celica, follow me"

"Yes, Keika-sama!"

We again entered the room to the right and moved to the basement's fourth floor.

The basement's fourth floor was bright. Magical lamps are lit and paintings and sculptures are put up.

We're heading to the room where Gould is in while I'm using "Clairvoyance".

There is one thing I have to be careful about.

"Did you get this, Celica. Even I don't know, where the transfer door is, so we'll have to take him down in an instant to not give him a chance to escape."

"Yes!"

Celica braced her graceful face and answered in a low voice.

--The bedroom is in the back.

Gould seemed to have finished his business just the moment I looked at him with "Clairvoyance". He was lying there completely naked and was smoking a cigarette.

He looks like a cunning man with his head balding up.

"I'll kick the door open and you'll immediately cast Blizzard."

"Yes"

A clear sound echoes when she draws her sword.

The slender sword gives off a white coldness. It's her Frozen Rapier.

I breathed in to fire myself up and kicked the door with full strength.

The door bents in the middle and flies into the room.

"Wh, what's happening!?"

Gould is perplexed on the bed. His bald head is shining.

Celica thrusts the sword forward and shouts with an ice-like, clear voice.

"Blizzard!"

gooo!

White, cold air is released from the sword.

The inside of the room freezes in the blink of an eye. The walls and ceiling are covered with white frost.

I jump inside and rush over to the bed.

"*Ha!*"

I slash at him.

I cut from his shoulder to his belly.

"*gyaaaa!*"

Gould's scream resounded inside the room.

But my Tachi doesn't stop.

I cut off his right arm from below the elbow and his left hand from the wrist. Moreover, I cut off the gold necklace, that was hanging from his neck.

There was a Fairy's Crest on his right arm and he wore a magical ring on his left hand. The necklace was also imbued with magic.

"It hurtsss! It huuuurtsssssss!!!!"

Gould is writhing in pain while he dyes the bed red.

I hold my Tachi at his throat.

"Give up. You're just small fry. Confess everything."

Then Gould looks up at me with his dark eyes.

"*guauuu*... confess, you say? I don't know anything."

"Well, it's the knights' task to investigate that."

Gould is roughly breathing with a pale face, but a vulgar smile is floating on it.

"Hehehe, so you're saying that you'll keep me alive? I'll make you regret that!"

"Hmm. I guess you have a point."

"Eh?"

I casually swung my Tachi.

Gould's neck dances in the air. The bald head shone.

I speak while I sheathe my Tachi.

"Thanks for the warning. You've most likely bribed all the senior officials in the country after all. I'll probably find quite a lot of evidence when I look around here."

Then I released the constrained Orc.

She made a strange face, jumped over and attacked me.

I evade the Orc's fist and hit her in the face.

The smashed body crashed into the wall.

"As an afterthought, it might have been better if I had just killed her."

"She was a demon after all... it can't be helped."

Celica spoke in a sad voice.

Then we searched the basement's fourth floor and compiled evidence like documents and letters.

They contained the ministers' preferences and lists of goods that were sent to them. The documents were all over the place.

There were also a lot of gold coins.

"Can the gold coins also be used as evidence?"

"They could probably be used as proof of bribery or tax evasion."

"I guess we can't take them then... there's a "Fruit of Agility".

"That might be useful"

Then I also found a black card. It looks like a cash card and is made of thin metal.

I could only identify it as [Some Black Card] when I looked at it with "Truth Sight". It seems to be an unfinished product.

I take it.

After that, we returned to the first floor with Gould's head, the Orc's corpse and a large bag filled with evidence.

It was noisy on the first floor.

Voices filled with fighting spirit could be heard from the outside.

It seems that the craftsmen are crowding the house.

"It went faster than expected."

"What should we do about her..."

Celica spoke while she was looking at the Naga.

There is a high possibility that she'll be mistaken for a demon and attacked.

I telepathically talk to Lilille.

--Lilille, you know how to erase Slave Crests, right?

"Yes, it's surprisingly easy."

--Please tell me.

"First is--"

I asked her how to do it. Even I can do it when I know how it's done.

I went to the Naga's side.

"Like this, then here, after that comes this"

I pressed against the Slave Crest at the Naga's right shoulder and traced it while I cast a spell.

It completely disappeared. It doesn't even leave a scar on her arm that is covered with scales.

"Thank you, Keika-sama"

"Don't worry about it. I'm just doing a favor for Ieturia. --Next is the elf."

"Yes"

The elf comes close. She rolls up her clothes and shows her back.

Her skin looks like white porcelain. Her limbs are thin.

I gently traced the Crest's curves.

"*a... --kuu!*"

It looked like the elf was in pain as she shook her body.

The Slave Crest disappeared.

--Then.

The craftsmen are rushing inside led by the soldiers.

"Hero-sama! --That demon is!?"

"This is a demon that can't be handled by you. Hence, I'll dispose of her. You'll save the other slaves. Gould's head and the evidence are over there. Also the kidnapped hostages."

"Yes!" "As expected, Hero-sama!" "Thank you very much!"

The soldiers and craftsmen were deeply moved and their voices were trembling.

I casually lift the Naga.

"Wh, what are you doing!?"

"Please pretend to be fainted for a while."

"Understood, I'll trust you"

The Naga closed her eyes and relaxed her limbs. Her limbs and snake body are sagging.

"Celica, Minya, Lapisia. I'll leave the aftercare to you."

"Yes" "Leave it to us" "Understood!"

I carried the Naga outside under their trustworthy replies.

The gathered craftsmen raised their voices in wonder.

"Wow!" "What is that demon!?" "Rather, isn't the one who easily lifts her seriously amazing!"

One of the soldiers approaches.

"Shall I help you with the disposal?"

"No, the blood is poisonous and she mustn't be recklessly handled. I'll dispose of her at another place."

"Understood, Hero-sama. I'll leave it to you"

It looks like my presence here has become widely known by now, everything has progressed as desired.

I threw the Naga into the ocean after I reached the harbor.

A large water column rises from the five meter long body.

Then she sticks out her face through the water surface.

"I'm sorry for the trouble, Keika-sama"

"I'm profiting as well, there's no problem. --Well then, do you know where Doruas is?"

"Yes, it's the port town that is eastward following the coast, right?"

"The Naga tribe has gathered there. I think that there are 35 right now. They are working at the Keika Beach and for the high speed transportation."

"Is that so? Thank you for telling me."

"Take care on your way."

"I won't be tricked a second time... I'm indebted to you"

The sound of the splashing water echoes as the Naga started to swim. Her snake body bends loosely back and forth.

I watched her until she disappeared along the coast before I left the place.

The number of soldiers had increased when I returned to the slave house.

The gathered craftsmen praised me with words like "As expected of you, Hero-sama!" and "Thank you for saving our comrades!".

I feel quite satisfied while I go inside.

All employees and slaves were assembled on the ground floor.

The craftsman Melvius spoke to me.

"Keika-san, I have a favor to ask, is that okay?"

"What is it?"

He speaks while he fiddles with the holy gold coin.

"...My wife can certainly be saved with this money"

"Aren't you glad?"

"But, there's no way to repay that much money even if I worked a lifetime."

"I guess that's normal."

"That's why, I want to offer myself as your slave for a lifetime. In exchange, could you please look after my wife as well?"

Melvius's blue eyes had a serious look inside them.

"Is your wife that important to you?"

"Yes. My parents have already died. My wife is my only family. Also, there's something I have to atone for..."

There seemed to be something on his mind, but I cut the talk because it seemed to be a longer story.

"I see. Understood. I'll accept your offer."

"Thank you for listening to my selfish request."

"In exchange, you'll have to move to my village in the neighboring country."

"Th, This is... craftsmen are prohibited from leaving the country."

"I'll just have to negotiate. Wait a sec."

I went to the captain of the knights.

"Captain, do you have a moment?"

"Ah, Hero-sama! Thank you very much for taking down Gould. Many crimes have come to light that he has committed. He even kidnapped the children of high officials and manipulated them at will."

"So it was like that after all. It's good that they have been saved. --I'll take the abducted elf with me. And as a reward I'll take one craftsman. Is that alright?"

"Hmm... I heard about the circumstances. Understood, I'll ask the king when I report

the results of the investigation."

"Thank you. I'll also ask the king. Also, you should dig this building up because it goes down until the fourth floor."

"Yes, we'll start immediately!"

The captain began to collect people who are skilled at digging holes in a loud voice.

As expected of a city filled with craftsmen. It shouldn't take long to excavate the basement.

I turned to Melvius.

"Aren't you glad?"

"Thank you"

He deeply lowered his head.

The captain speaks.

"Well then, Hero-sama. I'll contact you."

"Very well. I'll be at the inn."

"Yes"

We took Melvius and the elf and went back to the inn.



We arrived at the inn.

It is a luxurious building with two stories.

The elf rushed over to Fioria the moment we entered the large room.

"Fioria!"

"Ah, Nebula! I'm glad that you're alright!"

They are closely hugging.

The way the beautiful girls were entangled in their thin clothes became quite the eye candy.

Celica approached and crossed her arms while I looked at them. Her big breasts are being pushed up.

"Keika-sama, you have an indecent look in your eyes."

"Don't worry, I'm just looking. You're the only one I do lewd things with, Celica."

"Ah... P, Please don't say something like that"

Celica's cheeks blushed red and she put strength into her arms.

Her breasts are pressed like soft masses by her arms that are holding them in between. For some reason, I felt warm within my heart.

Lilille in her white habit spoke while having a beautiful smile floating on her face.

"Anyway, it looks like we're done here, right?"

"No, not yet"

"Eh?"

"There's still something I have to do."

"Huh?"

"Well, you'll see. Lilille, please accompany Melvius to his wife's place. Celica, please give me the money."

"Yes, Keika-sama"

I received the money from Celica and left the room.

Then I paid a visit to the blacksmith guild for some negotiations.

Chapter 76

Returning to the east

It's been several days since the criminal organization was destroyed.

The rain that started at dawn stopped in the morning.

The cleared up high blue sky made the atmosphere glitter.

We headed east under the morning sun.

To return to the Daphnes Kingdom.

I was called to the royal palace after everything was over and got highly praised by the king.

I received ten holy gold coins (50 million yen) and the permit for Melvius to leave the country as a reward.

After that, the people gathered at the plaza and honored my success.

Word about the incident seemed to have already spread, so they rewarded me with great cheers.

--It was perfect for selling my name.

And then, to build a foothold, work began at the three city walls that surrounded the royal capital.

To create gigantic murals of my achievements so far.

About how I defeated Greyhades in the north and single-handedly repelled the invading Demon Lord's army, how I protected the princess while defeating Evil Squid, how I defeated and tamed the rampaging dragon, how I defeated Barrier Muuk and saved the World Tree. And finally, how I freed Industria from the clutches of evil that were lurking in the shadows.

Of course, there are also love romances with a mermaid lady, an amazingly beautiful

princess, an elf, an angel and a goddess.

Celica complained, that it would be quite the stretch from the truth, but I don't care.

History is made by the winners after all, so there's no problem.

Anyway, why murals?

Industria is a manufacturing city.

That's why I thought that leaving something made by craftsmen behind would be the most effective way to sell my name.

Moreover, the wall is high and wide.

I also decided that all the craftsmen of the capital should work on it.

Then their families and they themselves will brag about the great work that they had participated in.

My name and achievements will surely be passed from parent to child, from grandfather to grandchild.

--Everything is as planned. My believers should increase as well.

I mean, they have already increased by about 300 people. The number of believers is now in the four digits.

I feel like dancing with joy.

Well, it took the complete ten holy gold coins that I got from the king to finance the construction.

It's an extra expense that is needed to spread my name.

I thought, that the king might refuse, when I asked him about the murals.

But it seems that the magic blocking cloth, that I had handed to the king, helped. I told him, that it would be dangerous, if it isn't replaced every three years, so I was able to persuade him quite effectively.

The final push was that the large amount of money would be returned to the country, so he pleasantly accepted.

I had finished everything I wanted to do in the Fabrica Kingdom.

And since I got a master blacksmith and a fairy, I decided to return to the Daphnes Kingdom.



It's been one week since we headed eastward.

We arrived at the border.

Lilille continued to teach Lapisia in the meantime and Lapisia learned several God Art magic techniques.

I had actually also learned a new skill.

[Justice Slash] Cuts through evil without harming the good. Twofold damage against demons.

The checkpoint could be seen in the distance.

Lilille spoke.

"It's time for me to take a different route."

"You could come to the village though."

"Well, I want to look around the north."

"...at Edelstein?"

"That as well"

"Don't get lost. You're quite clumsy after all."

Lilille inflated her cheeks. It still doesn't hurt her beauty though.

"I'm not clumsy. I only have to think a little before I act."

"Won't that make it even worse?"

"Shut up. And I taught Lapisia everything I could for now. --Lapisia, you'll obediently keep up your practice, right?"

"Yup!... also"

"What is it?"

Lapisia held the egg in both hands.

"Became white, so please..."

"Ah, the purification... you'll also might have to do it in the future. --Let's do it together."

"Yup!"

Lilille put her hands on Lapisia's small hands and began to stroke the white egg.

"Lapisia, please repeat my words --Oh peacefully sleeping soul..."

"Oh peacefully sleeping soul..."

They continued the chant for a while. It ended with a faint glowing of the egg.

Lilille pats Lapisia's head.

"Very well. Good girl."

"*ehehe*... worked hard"

I tilted my head while pondering.

"Should we return the eggs to the dragon? They might get stolen again though."

"Once they are purified, they won't give birth to calamities anymore, but it's certainly a difficult question."

"If they won't cause any calamities anymore, it's the dragon's own responsibility. So let's give them back. Are you also okay with that, Lapisia?"

"...Yup! Give children back to mother! Will give birth to your eggs, Keika."

Lapisia looked sad for a moment, but soon after smiled happily.

"*Sigh*... do you know where eggs come from?"

"Wrong?"

"Ah--, I'll tell you once you've grown up."

"Understood, looking forward!"

Her blue twin tails swung as she nodded.

I looked at the elf Nebula.

"Nebula, you also take care."

"Yes. Thank you very much, Hero-sama"

Her green hair swung as she bowed.

Lilille will accompany her to the elven village since she is also heading north.

However, Fioria and Rii will go with us because Rii's status is still worrying.

Thus, we parted with Lilille and Nebula and crossed the border.

We were warmly welcomed by the villages that we were passing through.

It seems that the villages that were damaged by the dragon received some treasures from the dragon.

I received their gratitude because apparently it was thanks to Hero Keika. I got some believers.

The mold for the statues was made in Kerkia, the village further to the west.

My bronze statues will be finished within this year.

Everything is working well.

And while I was at it, I decided to let them make another statue for my village.

After that, we met the dragon and returned the two eggs.

We could now use the shortcut through the dungeon.

"Oh... it's a beautiful white. You have my gratitude."

"Don't let them be stolen again, okay?"

"Ah, yes... I'll give my best"

"Also, since you have an agreement with the kingdom, don't leave the mountain area for a while"

"I know.

Then I conveyed another idea for a dungeon and we finally were on our way back.



It's been two weeks since we left Industria.

We had returned to the royal capital Chloe of the Daphnes Kingdom.

We go to Kynmerick's inn which is located in a back street.

The tavern's floor was clean and it was thriving although it was already past noon.

Minya speaks.

"It's so clean..."

"It seems, that the dirt at the walls was hid by hanging cloth at the walls, and the tables are now covered with marble to make them easy to clean"

Celica was impressed.

Lionel, who was serving customers, noticed us and came with a refreshing smile to the entrance.

"Keika-san, everyone. It's been a while, hasn't it-- please, take a seat wherever you like"

He wears a white shirt and black trousers, and the bow tie gives this juvenile with his delicate body a somewhat adult-like atmosphere.

"We have already eaten, so we don't need any meals. We also won't stay the night since we'll go to the village."

Lionel looked lonesome when I said this.

"That's a pity. I'll serve you tea and sweets for now."

"Did you come up with that?"

"Yup, I have many ideas. It's fun to make everyone happy. Thank you for introducing me."

He answered while letting his white teeth shine. His straightforwardness seems to be his main strength.

-- It's a good trend.

"So, have you found a goal for you?"

"No, not yet. But I can also think about that after I've rebuilt this run-down inn."

"Hey, hey. You don't have to call it run-down"

Kynmerick scolded him while he was peeping from the kitchen.

Lionel stuck out his tongue.

"Sorry, master. The earning are only dropping when Minya isn't here."

"You're too cruel. Rather, Keika, thanks for coming--oh"

Minya rushed into the kitchen and hugged him.

"Dad... I'm home"

"Oh! Welcome back, Minya! Above all, I'm glad that you're alright... or rather, have you gotten even stronger?"

"Yeah. I worked hard... this, is the menu? I'll help out"

"Ah, yes- Lionel, please teach her how it's done."

"Yes"

I called out to Lionel before he was about to return to the kitchen.

"Lionel. I'll take back what I said earlier. We'll stay the night after all and go to the village tomorrow."

--This is Minya's home as well.

It might be nice for her to spend some time with her father when we're visiting the capital.

"Got it... ah no, thank you very much Keika-san. I'll immediately prepare the rooms, so please wait a moment."

He swung his hair, bowed like an adult and quickly returned to the kitchen.

Some women at the other tables murmured "Cute", and I could somewhat understand them. The gap that is created by this boy who acts like an adult might be quite popular.

Celica and I sat down at the counter.

Everyone else sat down at a table.

I wonder whether the fairy in Minya's bag is still okay.

I talk to those at the table.

"Rii, are you alright?"

"Yup. I'm okay."

"Melvius, how is your wife?"

"She seems to be fine. I'm sorry for the trouble."

Melvius and his wife nodded with a smile.

I took a quick look at his tired wife. It was the right decision to stay the night after all.

Then Kynmerick came out of the kitchen.

His formerly wildly growing beard was now neatly trimmed. He wears black trousers and a white vest and shirt as well, and hesitatingly speaks.

"It's been a while. It must've been about a month"

"The impression of the inn changed. Your appearance as well."

I look around the shop. The number of rough men has decreased and the number of female customers has increased.

"We sell meals at daytime and alcohol at nighttime. We also decided to serve tea and confectioneries. It was Lionel's advice."

"Were the beard and clothes also Lionel's idea?"

"Something like that, because he said that this makes more money-- I don't really care about my looks though."

"No, it suits you"

"It looks very nice, Kynmerick-san."

Celica also praised him from the bottom of her heart.

Kynmerick shyly stroked his cheek.

"It's embarrassing to be told that by a beautiful woman. Well, thank you. --So, how was

it, the west? There was quite the uproar when the dragon came to the castle."

"Ah, that was..."

I told him about everything that happened while concealing the parts that couldn't be disclosed. Celica occasionally supplemented.

Kynmerick let out sounds of admiration while he gently stroked his trimmed beard.

--Then.

Minya came out of the kitchen.

She wore a white apron over the Miko clothes. It goes well with the slender legs, that are extending from her short, black skirt.

She served tea and pancakes without any unnecessary movements.

"Here. I brought tea and sweets"

"Thank you"

"It looks delicious"

Celica smiled and elegantly took a bite.

I also drank some tea because I got thirsty from talking. The refreshing fragrance moisturized my throat.

The pancakes weren't really big, but the dried fruits, that were mixed into them were sweet.

"It's delicious"

"Is that so"

Minya expressionlessly went to the table where Lapisia was sitting at, but her tail was joyfully swinging.

Kynmerick suddenly raised his voice.

"Ah, that's right. We got a report, that the residence at the village is ready."

"Perfect timing."

"Also, let's see... ah, it seems that the merchant Driad wants to talk to you."

"Hmm-- He still hasn't paid back the money I lent him and I wanted to meet him as well. Shall I meet him somewhere?"

"No, he should come soon. He comes every three days to see how Lionel is doing."

"I see. It might've been his father's request"

"He also delivers goods from Doruas to me."

Kynmerick laughed. It seems that he found a business opportunity. That's nice.

A voice came from the inn's entrance.

"Heeey, Kynmerick-san, I brought the usual things."

"Ah, sorry for all the time-- and, here's someone who was looking for you..."

When I turned around, Driad was standing in the entrance.

"Ah, Hero-sama... I wanted to meet you"

"It's been a while, Driad."

Driad came to the counter and sat down next to me.

"I'd also like a tea please, Kynmerick-san".

"Yes"

Kynmerick returned to the kitchen.

Driad lowered his head to me.

"Sorry for not contacting you until now."

"Did something happen?"

"The high speed transportation is going really well and here is the dividend for this month-- sorry that it's somewhat late."

Driad took a pouch from his pocket and took out 18 big gold coins from the inside.

"That's everything?"

"No, but that's all I have at the moment. There are the income from the swimsuits and the booth at the Keika Beach. Also I'm now making 5 trips each day with the high

speed transportation ship for twice the charge. But because the Naga increased, I had to buy equipment..."

"There should be 35 or 36 by now, right?"

"Yes. At the moment, about half of them are left over even if I include the guards at the Keika Beach. It feels like quite the waste..."

"Hm..."

I was pondering.

Kynmerick brought the tea and served it to Driad.

Driad sighs while he took a sip.

"So the ship can't make any more trips..."

A sudden idea flashed in my mind.

"How about adding some local transportation?"

"What do you mean?"

"Currently, you're just offering a direct trip between Doruas and the Capital, right? So how about adding some stops at the cities in between."

"I, I see! I should be able to expand the market by using the river to ship crops along the way. I can also transport fresh vegetables."

"The direct trip will have red headbands and red ships. The local ships blue headbands and blue hulls."

"A color code! That should avoid any confusion for the customers! As expected of you, Keika-san!"

--Well, it's a rip-off of Japanese trains.

"It might be good to make a route further to the north of the capital as well."

"That sounds good. I can get marble and wood from the city Kuryuu that lies at the northern end of the big river."

--And as the number of customers increases, the name of Hero Keika should further spread as well.

However, we'll have to first construct new ships for the Naga, so I have to postpone

the collection of the investments again.

"The north... There is a large river to the east of my village if I remember correctly."

The river curves to the northeast from the capital.

"Is that so."

"It might also increase the number of people who come to my village"

"The village was about half a day to the north from the capital, right? Maybe I should also try to invest there if there is a route."

"Please do so. And don't forget to spread the name of Hero Keika."

Driad strongly nods.

"Maybe we should rename it to 'Hero Keika Transportation'. Quite a few people might be afraid when the Naga increase."

"I see. They should have a peace of mind if it is named after a hero. Let's do this. You can leave the dividends at this inn for the time being."

"Very well. I'll immediately arrange for that. -- Well then, I'm off"

He drank up in one gulp, placed a silver coin on the counter and went out at a quick pace.

He seems to be a businessman through and through. I could entrust it to him.

"Celica, please take the money."

"Yes, Keika-sama"

Celica collected the big gold coins and put them into the bag at her waist.

Lionel came.

"Keika-san. I prepared the rooms. You have the usual room on the third floor. Your companions have the room next to it and Melvius and his wife have a small room on the second floor.

"That's very thoughtful. Thank you."

Lionel laughed shyly when I praised him.

"I was taught by master after all. Please take a good rest."

I nodded and turned back to the cake and tea.

Chapter 77

Leo's Report

It is evening in the royal capital Chloe.

We ate dinner at the inn.

It's the new menu that Minya brought back from the trip.

Dragon steak, a pie with nuts that she got from the elves, fish burgers from the craftsmen...

Kynmerick's voice can be heard from the kitchen while he snatches some food.

"What is this?! Isn't this already at the level of an innkeeper?!"

It's certainly delicious.

It seems that Minya became a cooking king during the trip.

While I was enjoying the delicious meal together with Celica, a man with long hair and a black robe came beside us.

He's taller than me and speaks while he looks down at me.

"Keika-san. It's been a while."

"If this isn't Dark. You look well."

"...can we speak in private?"

"Sure. Let's go to my room."

I stood up and guided him.

Two persons, who were completely concealed by their robes, were following behind Dark. They have the statures of a young man and a boy.

We entered the room on the third floor.

I speak while I sit on the bed.

"Dark, also Leo and Tilt. It's been a while."

They answer while they are taking off their robes.

"It's been a while, Keika-san"

Tilt, who was usually rather noisy, was fidgeting and his cheeks were blushed.

"Is something wrong, Tilt?"

"No... ehmm. I heard it from my comrades. Thank you for saving the World Tree, Keika."

"Don't worry about it. Rather, I'm sorry that I took your prey."

"...He had a curse, right? I wouldn't have been able to defeat him. --So, please tell me if I can help you in any way."

"Are you alright with that?"

"Yeah, I said some rather cheeky things before, so I have to do at least this much"

Tilt scratched his head and his face got even redder.

"Heh, then I'll look forward to it-- but before that, Leo, how went the search for the eggs?"

Leo, who sits on a chair, answers.

"It seems that Greyhades didn't have one when I asked the demons."

"It looks like the saint had Greyhades's egg."

"So it was like that after all. Just in case, we searched around the northern forest."

"How was it?"

Leo wrinkled his brows.

"There's an old road in the forest. It's now overgrown with trees and grass though. There were several fortresses that aren't in use anymore when we went north and there were several things that belonged to Greyhades. But there wasn't anything when we followed the road."

Dark added.

"There are multiple barriers inside the forest. We were separated and got lost when

we went further inside."

"A forest that makes you lose your way, huh..."

Tilt nods with his arms crossed.

"That forest is bad news. There's something strange with it."

"That even you got lost although you are an elf, Tilt... and you were also unable to do anything, Dark?"

"It was impossible on the spot. There are a countless number of barriers that incorporate tens of thousands of trees."

"Is that so. I couldn't feel anything when I was walking there though... maybe they were created when the Demon Lord's army withdrew. Well, it couldn't be helped that you were unable to investigate when you got lost."

Leo's hair swings when he nods.

"I think that we should look at other places and leave the forest be, since my demon friends said, that there isn't anything in the forest."

"That might be for the best. Do you have some other clues?"

"Yes. According to the demons, Barrier Muuk at the World Tree had one."

I spontaneously raised my voice.

"He had one?! I searched for it though!"

"It seems that he drilled a hole into the stump and buried it together with some demons' corpses. It seems to be at a recessed place on the northern side."

"At such a place! Please wait a moment"

I telepathically contacted Lilille while I scratched my head.

--Lilille. Lilille, are you there!?

There's no reaction.

--Ocean hag.

"...!"

Just now, I could feel some reaction.

--Lilille is beautiful. She has long eyelashes around her big eyes. Her well-proportioned small face perfectly fits a beautiful goddess. Her uniform legs are long and elegant. Her breasts are as wide as the ocean. Her curves are like waves. Her skin is as white as a sandy beach in midsummer. Her long hair..."

"P-Please stop! It's embarrassing, Keika-san! Please don't describe my bare body."

--Oh, so you actually heard me! Or rather, where are you at the moment?

"I'm currently at the elven village. Nebula has safely returned to the village! The World Tree is still weak, so I'll watch over it for a while!"

Lilille exclaimed in an angry tone. I can easily picture her cute, red face.

--Ah, that's good. The egg that Barrier Muuk had is at the World Tree.

"Eh!? Is that true?!! Even though there wasn't anything when we searched for it."

--It's in a hole in the stump together with the corpses of demons. It's on the northern side in an area that is slightly recessed. Please look for it."

"At such a place!... Understood. I'll immediately take a look."

--Please do so.

I breathed a sigh.

"Just what the hell did I do. I've never even thought about the possibility that it might be buried."

I relied too much on "Truth Sight".

"It seems to have been hidden quite well, so it couldn't be helped."

"Well, it's alright. I just requested the collection of Barrier Muuk's egg."

"Eh!? Just now? You're awesome, Keika"

"What kind of magic is that? I can't even guess"

Tilt and Dark were impressed.

I couldn't say that it's a godly power, so I kept silent.

Leo speaks.

"We also searched for the other eggs. It seems, that they are with the most influential guys after the Four Heavenly Kings."

"Are there such guys? Who are they?"

"It seems, that there is a vampire king, who lives in the southeast of the kingdom, but the exact location is unknown."

I tilted my head to the somewhat vague information.

"That's quite vague, given that the information comes from your demon friends."

"Although he seems to be cooperating with the Demon Lord's army, strangely there isn't much information about him. It's said that he even hides the information about himself from the Demon Lord."

"Eh!? Is that so. I'm surprised that the Demon Lord accepted that. Either he's amazingly strong, or might he have received some favor?"

"He seems to be an incredibly dreadful guy. It's said that his territory is just like hell."

"Oh. Please be careful when you investigate."

"I'll let you know once I have more details."

--So, now we are at four eggs.

"Another one should be with the last guy of the Four Heavenly Kings."

"Yeah, the fifth is with Gerdolf. We're still investigating the sixth."

Tilt is poking his cheeks while sitting on the chair.

"Gerdolf is always moving about for management purposes, so he's hard to grasp as well, even for my friends among the demons."

"He shouldn't even have time to sleep if he is managing everything by himself."

"We'll let you know once we find out his schedule."

Dark swung his hair while he answered.

"What is the dragon doing?"

"It seems, that she is busy with the creation of her dungeon."

"That's fine. The non-interference pact might crumble if she'd heedlessly move. It might also cause trouble for you, Leo."

"Well, we already asked her to leave everything to us without making a move herself."

Dark spoke while he pushed his glasses with a finger up.

"She's probably grateful for the help since she wasn't able to find even one on her own."

It might just have been the solution for her problem. Maybe it feels like the direct intervention of the gods to her.

"She certainly stands out with her large body, so it's no wonder."

Dark spoke with a bitter smile.

Then an idea flashed in my mind.

"Leo, I have a favor to ask"

"What is it?"

"You're currently acting while hiding your identity, right?"

I looked at the robe in his hand.

"That's right"

"Then, could you help me by making it look like the work of Hero Keika?"

"Why do you ask?"

"I need the faith of many people to defeat the Demon Lord-- in other words, it seems that my name has to be known."

"I see. You need everyone's prayers, huh. Understood, I'll try"

"I'm sorry for snatching your achievements"

"It's alright. You're the one who saved me after all. I'm only alive because of you, Keika-san."

Leo swung his blue hair and vividly laughed.

I bitterly smiled with admiration as he spoke from the bottom of his heart. He's just

too nice a person.

Dark and Tilt gestured something like "It can't be helped" with their hands.

--Then.

There was a knocking sound.

"Who is it?"

"It-It's me, Fal. Keika-san."

"Ah, please enter."

"Excuse me"

Fal entered the room, wearing a navy blue habit.

She stopped for a moment when she caught sight of Leo.

Then she clung to Leo while she cried.

"Leo-niisa~n!"

"Fal, I'm glad you're alright"

"Ah, I was so worried! I'm so glad. I'm so glad that you're alive!"

Fal hugged him tightly.

Leo smiled while he stroked her head.

--Just looking at them was heartwarming and I felt glad that I had saved them.

"You should talk at your room since it seems that it's been a while. We'll depart tomorrow, Fal."

"Yes, Keika-san. Thank you very much!"

She lowered her head while she bowed. Her veil slips off and her brown hair spreads out.

Leo smiled with a grin, picked up the veil and spoke.

"You never change, huh. --Then, shall we go?"

"Yes, Nii-san!"

Tilt and Dark also stand up.

"Well then, Leo. We'll return to our inn."

"Take care"

"Both of you, thank you. Thank you as well, Keika-san."

Leo leaves the room together with Fal after expressing his thanks.

"Well then, Keika"

"We'll come back when we have some new info."

Tilt and Dark are also about to leave the room.

"Ah, Tilt. Fioria is in the room next door."

Tilt stopped and frowned.

"I'm... , not really good with Fioria-nee-chan..."

"Rii is also there. You should be about the same age."

"Eh, what, really!? --Ah, I see. Rii grows up fast because she is a Half-Elf. She was so cute when she was little--"

"Are you friends?"

Tilt points at himself with his thumb.

"She's something like a little sister to me!"

"I guess that's why you're on bad terms with her mother. You probably took her along while doing mischief."

"Shuddup! I'm already through with the time at the village!"

"A mischievous black history, huh."

--But it's nice that they could be friends without any discrimination or distinction, even though Rii is a Half-Elf.

"How nostalgic. Rii is 70 years younger than me. We even have the same birthday."

"...Ah!! Can you tell me her exact age?"

"Wh, what is it suddenly... I'm 142 years old, so she is 72."

"I see, I see. Thank you. I was quite troubled because I didn't know her exact age. So her father was a human after all."

"That's right. Remembering months and years is quite hard for elves since we live for thousands of years. I remember the number of years because I also lived in the human society since I was young."

"Well, she might be happy if you show your face."

"I get it... Dark, I'm sorry, but please go back to the inn without me."

"You don't have to mind me"

Dark had a parenting smile floating on his face.

Then they left.

Suddenly the room feels quite empty.

It might be quite a while until the next report. --Maybe I should go back to dinner.

I stood up and went back to the tavern.

I was contacted by Lilille during the meal and got told that she had safely secured the egg.

We were unable to find it because the hole was completely covered by the World Tree's life force.

It seems that she was attacked by rotten demon beast zombies after she dug up the hole and got completely covered with liquids.

--I wish I would've seen you, all wet and see-through...

"Ah! Please don't say strange things! I definitely won't show you!"

She was still mad.

Although it sounded like she was alright, I was still worried that she might have been injured by poison or acid, so I looked in the direction of the World Tree with "Clairvoyance".

It would hurt my heart if her smooth skin would be scarred.

Then I caught sight of a peerless beauty who was bathing in a spring near the stump.

The water droplets on her white skin are bewitchingly shining as she bathes in the moonlight. She is a beauty with well formed breasts and wonderfully proportioned curves.

The wet, peach-colored hair that reaches until her waist is beautiful.

This goddess doesn't have even one single injury.

--I'm glad. It doesn't seem like you've been hurt.

"Eh? --*kyaaa!* Pervert!"

Lilille's face turned bright red and she stooped down into the spring, emitting a splashing sound as she hit the water surface.

A barrier was set up and I couldn't see her anymore. Too bad.

Celica was staring at me while I was grinning.

"Keika-sama...? You're thinking about something indecent again, right?"

Celica has a sharp intuition.

But I won't dodge.

"You knew?"

"Ah... you're hopeless"

Celica inflated her cheeks and turned sideways.

I tried to push the bulge with my finger. A strange sound leaked from her cute lips.

"What do you think you're doing?"

Most likely because she was embarrassed, Celica's face was flushed and she was lightly hitting at me.

"Sorry, my bad"

"Again and again!"

Celica was cute when she was embarrassed and sulking, and she forgave me after I stroked her blond hair many times over.

Chapter 78

The Keika Village residence

We went back to the village to the north of the capital the next day around noon. I've been away for more than a month.

Several wheat fields are already beginning to change into a golden color.

It lets you feel the arrival of autumn.

Fioria, who is riding a Boo Horse, mutters while she looks at the fields.

"They are growing well. It feels nice, doesn't it?"

--Rii, who was riding with her, nodded. She prudently smiled.

First we'll head to the residence that was built in the east.

It is at a large plot of land in the village's outskirts. The site is rectangular shaped and concealed by a fence. It is about 30 meters wide and has a building of about the same size in the back.

The plot is larger than the mayor's house and they had to specifically allocate a vacant plot outside of the village.

There are three one-story buildings. We'll live in the mansion in the back. In the center of the land is a wooden stage. And to the right is a tenement with five rooms.

There is also a backyard, although it's not visible from the front.

The point is, that is was laid out like a typical shrine with something like an inner sanctuary, a front shrine and a shrine office.

Although it was made with the local crafting techniques and looked like a blend between western and Japanese styles, it was without a doubt my shrine.

I can't stop grinning.

Celica spoke while she surveyed it.

"It's a wonderful residence. It's quiet and splendid."

Fal nodded in agreement.

"It also feels sacred somehow. It has a nice atmosphere."

--As expected of a nun. She knows her stuff.

I nod while I have a smile over my whole face.

"Yeah. I can't go with anything less when I'll become a Valor God."

"But there are no buildings with two or even three stories."

"That would be difficult with the village's crafting techniques and even then it would take a lot of time. They also have to do agricultural work, so there aren't enough hands."

"Ah, you've thought that far ahead. As expected of you."

Celica was deeply impressed.

Minya tilts her head while her pointed ears are standing.

"Where is, the kitchen?"

"It should be in the back of our house."

"Ah. Looking forward."

"Shall we take a look at the residence?"

We walk around the front shrine and went to the residence in the back.

--Maybe this way should be paved with stone. The ground will sink in when there are a lot of people. And I want to cover the sides with gravel. I hope that there is something like that in this world.

I also want to plant high trees along the outer perimeter.

There has to be some dignity if I want to gather believers.

While I was thinking about those things, Clarissa came out of the tenement. One young girl is following behind her. She was one of the slaves if I remember correctly.

"Welcome back, Keika-sama."

"Welcome, back."

"We just returned. It looks like everyone is well."

"It's all thanks to you, Keika-sama. We've been cleaning the residence every day. The furniture is from the mayor. We slaves are living in the tenement."

"Heh. Melvius, Olivia. This is the slave chief Clarissa. Clarissa, please look after these two who came from Industria."

"Understood--welcome to this far away place."

"We'll be in your care-- *a!*"

Melvius's wife was staggering beside him. Melvius holds her.

"Are you alright, Olivia?"

"Yes... , I'm just a little tired..."

"Melvius, please let your wife rest. Clarissa, please be so kind."

"Leave it to me--then, please follow me."

"I'm sorry, Clarissa-san."

Guided by Clarissa, Melvius entered the tenement with his wife.

The girl brought the luggage inside.

I tilt my head.

"I thought that she had completely recovered by the medicine and magic though."

I couldn't find any abnormalities in her status.

"She was perfectly fine in the morning. Maybe she's just tired from traveling."

Celica's face was clouded with anxiety.

"Well, let's see how things develop for now. Let me know if something happens."

"Yes. I'll ask about her condition later."

We headed to the residence in the back.

The residence is facing south and is wooden with a stone foundation. Logs are lined up like pillars in the front. The exterior looks like an imitation of the Parthenon. Although it's just one story made of wood.

The entrance was spacious when I opened the door and entered.

A long corridor divides the center of the residence, and there are three rooms at the southwestern side and three rooms at the southeastern side.

Five rooms were lined up on the northern side and in the northeast were the kitchen and the dining room.

"Let's make the room directly after the entrance to the west into a reception office. My room will be next to it. That makes it easy to deal with guests. Do you want the room next to it, Celica?"

"Eh? Ah, Yes."

She behaved as if she had received a surprise attack. Her blond hair swung.

"By any chance, did you plan to take a room together with me?"

"Th-This is... I'm fine either way."

Celica's cheeks blushed as she cast her eyes downward.

"I, also want a room!"

"You're right, Lapisia. Let's give you and Minya rooms on the northern side. Fioria, Rii and Fal should use rooms on the east side. The room at the entrance will be a storeroom."

"Eh...? Isn't the storeroom usually in the back of the house?... Well, since it's you, you most likely have already deeply thought about that, so please do as you like."

Celica tilted her head but didn't retort.

Well, in case of an ordinary person that would be the case.

Actually, I was thinking about putting an object of worship into that room while making it look like a storeroom.

That way, I can hear the wishes of the people who visit the front shrine, no matter where I am in the world.

Lapisia's eyes sparkled as she spoke.

"I, want entrance room!"

"Rejected. Lapisia, you're even forbidden from entering there."

"Ugh... yes"

Lapisia tampered her cute lips to a point.

It'll become your shrine if you live there after all, Lapisia!

That's what I thought but couldn't say because everyone present.

She probably grasped the function of the residence instinctively.

She might be a child, but she's still a god after all.

"Well then, everyone, how about checking your rooms?"

Suddenly, Minya's bag was moving violently.

The fairy Haya shows her face.

"Where is my room?"

"Maybe the room next to the storeroom... no, you might be seen when someone comes to the entrance. --Celica, can fairies stay at a normal house?"

"There are rumors, that fairies have miraculous powers and they can be sold for a high price when captured, hence it might invite unnecessary trouble."

"I don't want to live with forced labor again."

She wildly shook her head. Her triangular, pointy hat is shaking.

"What do you want to do, Haya?"

"I just want to live in peace and create tools."

"I also want you to create tools... Maybe I can build a small workshop in the backyard."

Then Fioria spoke.

"In that case, how about leaving her with us for the time being? We know more about fairies than humans after all."

"That might be for the best. I was told that fairies and elves belong to the same group. I'll leave her to you."

"Yes, Keika-sama."

"Celica, you'll protect them in case of trouble."

"Yes, Keika-sama."

Rii spread her arms.

"Come here, Haya-chan."

"Yeees."

She jumped out of the bag and leapt into Rii's arms.

Haya looks just like a pretty doll when she's held by a girl.

"Well then, please check the rooms. Fioria, please come to the entrance once you've brought in your luggage."

"Yes"

We entered our respective rooms, unpacked the luggage and checked the rooms.

I immediately left the residence afterwards.

The wide ground with the high, blue sky feels refreshing.

I approached and looked at the front shrine.

It's a wooden, rectangular stage that is supported by thick pillars. It's not large, but it looks like Kagura can be performed.

I'll ask Minya someday.

Fioria came out soon after.

Her green hair is coiled up by the wind while she approaches. Her breasts pushed up the fabric as they boldly shook.

"What do you want, Keika-sama?"

"Is it true that elves are good at handling trees and plants?"

"Yes, we have to take care of the World Tree after all. But we're also familiar with other

plants."

"In that case, is it possible to plant trees around the residence to act like a wall?"

To my question, she looked around the fenced site, crouched down and touched the ground. Her seductive thighs are peeking from her short skirt.

"Hmm, let's see... The earth is a little infertile since it's residential land. It might be difficult for trees from foreign countries to grow even when using fertilizer."

"I see"

"Is there a forest nearby? It's easier for young trees, that are growing in the same earth, to take root."

"That's an expert for you. That might be for the best. Can you please do that?"

"Yes, please leave it to me"

"Then, I'll go ask about the forest."

"Until later."

Fioria saw me off while holding her disheveled hair down.

I headed to the mayor's house.



A large building with two stories in the center of the village.

I freely enter and go up to the second floor.

A maid was slightly startled when I passed by her in the corridor.

"He-Hero-sama, i-it's been a while"

"Is the mayor available?"

"Ye-Yes, he's in the study on the second floor."

"Very well."

I step into the study without knocking.

The mayor was taken aback and wryly smiled when he caught sight of me.

"Th-This is... It's been a while, Keika-sama."

The mayor greeted with a flattering attitude. His long, white beard is trembling from anxiety.

I don't care because he's only reaping what he has sown.

"It's been a while."

"Have you already seen the residence?"

"Yes, well done. It's exactly what I wanted."

"Then I'm glad."

The village mayor seemed to be relieved from the bottom of his heart.

"How is the village?"

"Thanks to the expanded barrier, we are able to harvest fast growing vegetables and root crops."

"Sounds good. Should I expand the barrier even further?"

"Eh? Is that okay?"

"Sure. In exchange, I want you to rename the village to Hero Keika Village."

"Eh, to change the village's name!? But to decide that on my own discretion... can I at least decide after discussing it at the village assembly once...?"

"Ah, sorry. It seems you misunderstood. I want you to go around to persuade the villagers and officials to change the name to Hero Keika Village."

"And, if I can't do that...?"

I was forcefully sighing.

"If I remember correctly, there is some village in this country, where all the villagers tried to kill the hero. And hasn't said hero already made friends with the king and saved the princess...? Maybe he should directly talk to the king about it when he visits the capital next time..."

"I'll do it, please let me do it!!"

The mayor's face was crumpled as he pleaded.

--With this, I can further spread the name of Hero Keika.

"Is that so? Then you'll do it? I'd be delighted if you could do it as fast a possible-- as for the funds..."

I walked to a wall and removed the picture that was hanging there. There were three big gold coins.

"The talks should go smoothly with these."

"Th, Those are, the expenses for the festival"

"The festival? Are the preparations for the festival done?"

"Yes, we're just finishing up. It'll be a large festival because of the good harvest."

"Is that so. Please give it your best... Next, is there a forest nearby where I can take trees from?"

"There is a small forest to the east if you need wood."

"Do I get there when following the road in front of my residence eastward?"

"That's right. Wild plants can be picked up in spring and nuts in autumn."

I put my hand at my cheek while I'm in thoughts.

"I guess I shouldn't damage it too much..."

Although I have to collect as many believers as possible, it'd be for naught if I invite the villagers opposition.

"Yes, if possible... please keep it at a minimum."

"I know. I'll only take them to the extent that the forest isn't affected. Well, it should be okay since I have elves."

"Elves!?"

"Ah, that's right. I forgot to mention it, but I brought two elves and lots of slaves with me. Later there will also be clerics and sinners. Please be careful not to give rise to disputes."

"I, I see... understood. I'll tell the villagers."

The mayor now looked somewhat uneasy.

I suddenly remembered something and asked.

"By the way, how exactly are you identifying the sinners in this village?"

"Ah... with, this crystal ball."

The mayor took a palm-sized, round ball out of the desk's drawer. The ball emits a ghastly purple light.

"Heh."

I closely looked at it with "Truth Sight" when I received it.

[Sinner Judgement Device (New type)] Shines when approached by a sinner.

--As expected, it doesn't seem to have been made by the Demon Lord. He's inside the cocoon after all.

There wasn't any long distance view incorporated into it.

"I'll borrow it for some time."

"Yes, Keika-sama."

"Then, I'll expand the barrier around the field tomorrow."

"Thank you. We'll be in your care."

I left the study after I had finished the talk.

While I was closing the door.

"Ah, what have I done... I have to succeed..."

I heard the mayor's words of anguish.

Chapter 79

Rii's treatment (with full force)

It was evening when I left the mayor's house and returned to the residence. Smoke rose from the kitchen area while the dinner was prepared.

First I wanted to pay a visit to the elf Fioria after I entered the residence. I knocked at the door and asked.

"Do you have a moment?"

"Yup, it's fine. Keika-san"

Rii answered in a bright voice and I entered the room.

It's a simple room with only a bed, a table and a chair.

All the rooms looked like that at the moment.

Rii had unfolded some paper on the table and was writing something. She looked like a girl of about 14 years.

Haya was rustling in a corner.

"Mom is helping with the dinner"

"I see. Are you studying?"

"Ah, no. I was thinking about how to plant the trees in the garden. You want the trees arranged side by side, right?"

"Something like that... I thought that they might act as blindfolds and shields against the wind."

"I see~. Then, it might be best to plant the trees about 1 or 2 meters away from the fence in equal intervals and grow shrubs near the fence."

"A hedge? That sounds good."

"Very well. Then we'll do it this way."

Rii is whistling a song while she moves the pen over the residence's sketch. Her shoulder-length, green hair is silkily swaying.

I approached Haya.

"Haya, can you help me with something?"

"What's the matter, Keika-san?"

"Here, can you modify this?"

I took the sinner judgment ball, that I had borrowed from the mayor, from my pocket.

It is emitting a way stronger purple light now than it did at the mayor's house.

Most likely because it's now near Rii with her "Light"-attribute.

It really doesn't seem to be sufficient to only change the status entry to fool the new devices.

Haya looked at the ball and wrinkled her thin eyebrows. She seemed to be disgusted.

"It emits a sinister aura. It feels creepy."

"It's a Sinner Judgement Device. It shines purple when the 'Light'-attribute is present."

"Seems like that..."

Haya took the ball, frowned, and examined the ball by tapping at it with her small hands.

"Can you modify it to... let's see... maybe light up when a demon approaches?"

"Hmm... I don't think it's impossible. At least if you know exactly what distinguishes the demons from other creatures."

"Oh, is that so?"

Greyhades and Evil Squid are without a doubt complete demons.

But big wolves and lizards can also be considered as ordinary creatures.

In the end it's a matter of perception.

It depends for example on the person whether they see a Naga as a demon or not.

"Hmm. Then, can you let it light up when the "Darkness"-attribute is present?"

--As of now, the people pretty much only have one of the four basic element attributes or the "Light"-attribute and I haven't really seen the "Darkness"-attribute often.

"That's easy to do."

Haya hit her chest with her small hand. Her triangular hat is slightly fluttering.

"Then, please modify it in that way."

"Alrightyy-. It'll be done by tomorrow morning-"

"Very well."

Haya took out things like a small hammer, a chisel and a burner.

I borrowed a pen and paper and drew some magic circles. They are the multi-layered magic circles to deceive the sinner judgement.

"Also, can you please engrave these into iron scraps? I want you to make them as small as possible."

"Yees. These are invalidating the ball's effect, right? I'll give my best."

"Alright. I'll leave it to you"

Haya was happily enjoying herself as she held her tools and started to work.

That should ensure Fal's, Rii's, Celica's and the other sinners' safety.

When I raised my head, I saw Rii, who was curiously looking at us. Or rather, she was keenly looking at Haya's hands.

--Ah, perfect timing.

"Rii. I'll fix your body, so can you please lie down on the bed? And please take off your shirt."

"Eh... right now?"

"Yeah. The same as before. It'll be over in a moment."

I now know her age and race since Tilt has told me.

All I have to do is to edit the status.

Rii cast her eyes downward and blushed.

"I-Its, embarrassing..."

"Your condition will worsen again if I don't cure you."

"Ugh... understood"

She slowly undressed and laid down on the bed.

She hides her chest with her thin arms, but the not concealed, white skin is dazzling.
Only her childish, shapely face and her long elven ears were red.

The bed was creaking when I sat down next to her.

I took her hands, that were hiding her chest with one hand and held them above her head.

Then I slide with the other hand over her small breasts and delicate body.

"*A...!* *Aa!... *"

Rii's slender limbs trembled and her long legs were crossing each other since she was unable to endure it. Her short skirt flipped up and I could see her underwear.

"Please move as little as possible."

"Bu-But. It tickles... *ah*"

Her body was quivering, matching the movements of my fingertips.

It'll be bad if I mess up the status change, so I gently touch her white skin and carefully move my fingertips while the warmth of her smooth skin is transmitted to them.

Rii's well-featured face distorted when she closed her eyes and was biting her teeth.
Nevertheless, gasping sounds leaked from her a flower-like, red lips.

"*uu* ... *au!* ...!"

"Does it hurt?"

"I-I'm fine, so, please hurryyy..."

"Then, don't move!"

I move my fingertips further.

"A-After all-- can't!"

Rii tries to escape by twisting her body. Her green hair, that reaches until her shoulder, is violently disheveled.

"Hey, it's dangerous!"

Any interruption to the procedure would be an unnecessary risk.

I forcefully move my body onto her slim waist and trace the shape of her breasts with my right hand while I press against her shoulder with my left.

"No...! *Ah!*"

She's struggling beneath me, but her slender arms don't have any strength when they are pushing against my chest.

I moved my hands with a little more strength and traced her sides and neck with my fingers.

Rii's cheeks got red and she roughly breathed with "*haa haa*".

Pinning her down certainly made the editing easier.

I rewrite the text and numerical values at the same time.

--I currently have 1000 believers.

I should be able to rewrite a little deeper than just on the surface layer now.

As if diving into her slender limbs, I put strength into my fingertips. My fingers are covered with moist sweat.

"*Aa--!*"

Maybe because of pain, Rii was strongly gasping and her slender limbs bent like bows. Finally, I put my hand on her forehead and looked at her with "Truth Sight".

[Status]

Name: Rii

Gender: Female

Age: 72

Race: Half-Elf

Job: Spirit User

Classes: Spirit Art User Lv8 Magic Tool Engineer Lv1 Gardener Lv1

Attributes: "Wood" "Light"

"Alright. It's a success... how is your body?"

I moved to the side while I asked.

Rii didn't reply, covered her eyes with one hand and was repeatedly wildly breathing. Her skirt was turned up and although her thin legs could be seen until their base, she didn't plan to hide them.

I picked up the crumbled shirt and put it over her body.

Then Rii spoke in between her breathing intervals.

"My head, is spinning"

"Eh? Are you alright? You should be properly healed though"

"...I-I know, but, this is different."

She raised her body while speaking in a scolding tone and leaned against my chest with her half-naked body. The directly felt, flushed skin was hot and soft, as if it would melt.

"Are you really alright? Your body feels hot."

"...My body feels way lighter than before."

"That's a good sign."

I felt relieved and tried to separate from her, but she held onto my clothes and I couldn't get away.

She looks up to me with upturned eyes. Her large, round eyes are moist.

"Keika-san, pat me."

"Hm? Well, I don't mind"

I stroke her soft, green hair.

Rii was leaking small breaths each time she was stroked and she leaned more and

more against me.

Her condition settled down after a while and I asked.

"By the way, do you have an interest in Magic Tool Engineering?"

"...Yup. I heard various things from Haya before. It seems to be quite interesting."

"Maybe you should try to help Haya"

"Yup! I intend to."

"Give your best-- Haya, I'll also rely on you."

I looked at Haya, and her hands moved so fast, that they looked like six while she was working.

I've never heard about anyone who could do that before.

Rii was giggling.

"Haya-chan, amazing"

"I don't think you'll have to imitate that."

"Guess so."

Rii and I were laughing while embracing each other.

--Then.

There was the sound of someone running through the corridor.

Rii quickly separated from me and hastily put on her shirt.

Fioria came into the room just at the moment when she was finished dressing.

"Ah, perfect timing, Keika-sama. Also Rii. Dinner is ready, please come to the dining room."

"Okay, we'll come right away. I just finished Rii's treatment."

"Oh! How was it!?"

"It went well and she's most likely healed. I'd still like to watch her condition for one or two months though."

"I understand, Keika-sama. I'll give my best to make this residence wonderful in the

meantime."

"Thank you very much. I'll rely on you."

"Yes, please leave it to me... Rii, please also try your best to be useful to Keika-sama."

Fioria left the room suggestive glance.

Rii clings to me.

"I-Is this okay, Keika-san? She isn't angry, right?"

"Why? I was just treating you."

"Th-That's right, isn't it? It's... treatment"

I get off the bed and Rii follows.

Rii's cheeks were blushed and she was holding onto my clothes with her fingertips when we went to the dining room.



Everyone ate dinner in the evening.

We're sitting at a large table.

Minya and Clarissa lined up gorgeous meals while swinging their arms around.

Dried shellfish and fresh salad, river fish in Meunière sauce, fried cutlets, scooped vegetables, soft bread, grilled large birds, cream stew with meat and mushrooms.

"Come, please eat. It's a celebratory meal."

"We made a lot... please eat."

"Thanks for the meal."

Everyone started to eat simultaneously and their cheeks slackened from the deliciousness after they took a mouthful.

"It's been a while since I had this salad."

Celica moves her hand with a smile. It's a salad that seems to be sour from fermentation. It tastes similar to Chinese cabbage and is a specialty of Edelstein.

Clarissa was giggling when I looked at her.

"There's still a lot more! So, please eat a lot!"

Delicious food and bustling conversations.

--Meals are particularly delicious when shared with a large number of people.

A smile floated on my face while I thought such.

The enjoyable dinner continues.

The tiredness of the trip disappeared within the laughter.

But there was quite the shock after dinner.

--This residence... doesn't have a bath...

It couldn't be helped, so we had to use cold water to cleanse ourselves.

I'd like to do something about it, but there was still something I had to do before that.

Chapter 80

Village and workshop development

The next day arrived at Keika Village.

I ate breakfast and went to expand the demon-repelling barrier around the fields.

Although it's deformed, it's fundamentally a round magic circle.

Aristocrats can also let them be made with something like seven or fifteen corners, but they are cumbersome to expand.

That's why they are usually equilateral triangles or squares when requested by villages. And they collect money and request a Barrier Magician each time the barrier has to be expanded.

I tended to it in the morning, because then there wouldn't be any interference, and expanded the barrier to its maximum.

As a result, there was now more than five times the agricultural land.

Farming will be difficult if it's even further away from the village.

That'll be more than enough for now.

The voices of the villagers who guided me were shaking from joy and surprise.

"Amazing, it's so much space!"

"Just how much money would that cost...! Thank you very much!"

The villagers cried from joy.

It was a bit embarrassing since it was nothing for me.

In the meantime, I sent Lapisia to take care of Fioria and Rii, who were tree planting.

Because there's the danger, that demons come out.

I told her to contact me through telepathy should something happen.

Nevertheless, I looked at them with "Clairvoyance" from time to time.
They didn't seem to have any problems to look around the forest and select trees.



Noon.

I went to Celica's room after I got back to the residence and had lunch.
Celica was looking after Haya since Fioria and Rii were out in the forest.

"Do you want something, Keika-sama?"

Celica's blond hair swayed when she tilted her cute head.

"There's something I'd like to ask Haya."

Haya, who was sitting on the table and maintaining her tools, raised her head.

"What's the matter, Keika-san?"

"I'm thinking about building a workshop specifically for you in the backyard. Can you please draw a blueprint for a good layout?"

"Ooohh~, Thank you, Keika-san. I'll make it at once."

She immediately stopped working on her tools, stood up, spread a sheet of paper on the table and began to move her pen.

"Well then, I'm off to visit Melvius."

Celica's blue eyes are slightly closing when she smiles seemingly lonely.

"You're quite busy, aren't you, Keika-sama? Please don't hesitate to tell me if I can help you with anything."

"Thank you, Celica."

I left the room and went to the tenement.



The tenement was laid out like an apartment building with a corridor stretching out from the entrance and the doors to the rooms alongside it.

I knock at the door to Melvius's room.

"What is it?"

"It's me, Keika. I've got work for you."

"Keika-san? It's open."

Melvius was having a meal when I entered the room. There was an empty plate on the table.

His wife Olivia was lying on the bed. It seems that Melvius was nursing his wife and helped her eating.

"You don't look very well."

"No, I'll be better once I've slept. Thank you for your consideration."

Olivia's reddish hair swayed as she lowered her head.

"Let me take a quick look at you."

I approached Olivia, put my hand on her forehead and looked at her status with "Truth Sight".

[Status]

Name: Olivia

Gender: Female

Age: 27

Race: Human

Job: Black Magician

Class: Mage Lv 6 Office Worker Lv 5 Crafting Lv 10

Attributes: "Wind"

Condition: Healthy

Muscle strength: 22 (+4) Max 75

Agility: 13 (+2) Max 60

Magical power: 10 (+1) Max 45

Wisdom: 18 (+3) Max 30

Luck: 9 (+1) Max 46

Vitality: 170

Mental Strength: 100

Her status didn't indicate any problems.

The skills are rather common.

She would show faster growth as a swordsman or a warrior rather than as a mage though.

But that would be harsh to tell to a sick person.

"Hmm... , there don't seem to be any problems."

"I understand. Thank you very much, Hero-sama. I plan to help everyone with the work after noon."

"Wi-Will this really be okay...?"

Melvius frowned anxiously.

Olivia smiles.

"I'm alright. Thank you, darling."

I spoke.

"Well, don't push yourself when you're sick. But you never told, that you're a mage."

"Eh!?"

"What do you mean??"

The couple put their heads together. It's the same gesture I've often seen during the trip.

"Hm? Have you studied something like that?"

"I don't know. I only learned about accounting books and housework."

"Hm?"

"It can't be, this is...! Keika-san, what my wife says is true. She's my childhood friend and she's ever only been sick in bed after I made a blunder asked her to wound herself."

"I didn't have any time to learn any magic."

I was in thoughts.

That's strange. Her level is rather high for that though.

It shouldn't rise that much unless you defeat opponents or diligently study.

"You said that there was a blunder. What exactly happened?"

Melvius cast his eyes downward when I asked him.

"Th-This is..."

"Does it have to do with smithing?"

Melvius raised his head and opened his eyes wide.

"H-How do you know!?"

"I'm a hero after all"

It's not really an explanation, but he was convinced, lowered his head and talked about it bit after bit.

"I liked manufacturing ever since I was little. How simple materials became useful tools by my own hands. I was praised when I made good tools. I was happy about that."

"Moreover, you had talent, right?"

"Yes. Just by normal forging, when I made a knife, it became a magic knife. I was called a prodigy. But then-- I quit."

"What happened?"

"It was her birthday, so I worked diligently and made a knife for her as a present. She had said since like forever, that she wanted to become one, so I made a knife that let her become a mage."

"Oh"

"I made the knife with the thought in mind, that everyone who is wounded by it becomes a mage. But when she cut into her fingertip, she was in pain, got a fever and had to stay in bed since then. I regretted it so much, that I wanted to die. I put the hammer away and lived for her sake after that.

--So that's the reason why he didn't become a blacksmith, huh.

"I see. You touched a god's taboo by trying to change the existence of a person as a mere human."

"Then, divine punishment was handed down. Moreover, it didn't hit me, but her. I really was foolish."

Melvius clutched his fist in regret.

"Darling... I was the one who wanted it. It wasn't your fault."

"But...!"

"Well, she can be healed now that I know the cause."

"R-Really!?"

"She should've been healed with medicine and magic, but the her constitution is still bad, which means, that you still haven't solved the root of the problem."

"Wh-What shall I do!? I'll do anything!"

"Oh-- anything, huh. Then, please pick up the hammer again once I've healed her."

"Ugh... no, if you wish for it, I'll do it. I beg of you, please help her!"

I approached Olivia and removed the sheet.

"Well then, I'll treat you. Please undress you upper body."

"What on earth!?"

"Don't worry, it's just treatment. The reason for her poor health is, that you made the knife while not knowing a lot about mages. Your image about mages most likely originates from stories and hearsay, right?"

"N-Now that you say it, that's right."

A job like Black Magician shouldn't exist. At least in this world.

Therefore, it seems to give an abnormal burden to the body.

Olivia nodded in earnest and undressed her upper half.

Her breasts, that can fit in the palm of a hand, are exposed and facing upward.

"Keika-sama, please... Darling, please also watch."

"Yes-- Keika-san, I entrust her to you."

"Yeah, it'll be over soon."

I placed my hand on her soft breast, causing it to deform. The immoral softness of the married woman is transmitted to my fingertips.

I stroke her stomach and her cleavage. Her round bulges are shaking in accordance with the movements of my fingertips.

Finally I placed my hand on her forehead.

It ended with me not having to touch her that much because I only erased a little.

[Status]

Name: Olivia

Gender: Female

Age: 27

Race: Human

Job: Merchant

Class: Mage Lv 6 Office Worker Lv 5 Crafting Lv 10

Attributes: [Wind]

Condition: Healthy

Muscle strength: 22 (+4) Max 75

Agility: 13 (+2) Max 60

Magical power: 10 (+1) Max 45

Wisdom: 18 (+3) Max 30

Luck: 9 (+1) Max 46

Vitality: 175

Mental strength: 100

The same as before.

Or rather, her HP was decreased.

Maybe because of the fever?

I released my hand and spoke.

"That's it. She should be okay with this."

Melvius rushed over to the bed.

"Olivia, are you alright!?"

Olivia raises her upper body and checks her body.

"...My body felt heavy before, but now it feels very refreshed."

"Thank god, Olivia!"

Melvius hugged the half-naked Olivia.

Olivia's face reddens.

"Da-Darling... Keika-sama is present!"

He hurriedly separates.

"You're right. Thank you, Keika-san! I'll do whatever I can for you!"

"Is that so. Then, I want you to construct a building."

"Leave it to me!"

He hit his chest while having moist eyes.

"Then, let's go to the backyard at once. I want you to build a special workshop."

"Understood!"

Melvius stands vividly up.

I took him with me and we headed to the backyard.



The backyard was 30 meters wide and ten meters long.

There should be enough room for about five warehouses or sheds.

There was an abundance of space since the designated land was outside the village.

I showed Haya's workshop blueprint to Melvius.

It's a small hut of about eight tatamis and the plan even has the exact positions for the cooking stove, shelves and workbench drawn in there.

"I want you to build it to the furthest in the west. Can you do that?"

He looks serious and strokes the corners of his mouth.

"...This blueprint is quite detailed... but, it's overflowing with functional beauty. I think it's possible if I just get the building materials."

"In that case, speak to Celica and get some money from her, you can even go to the capital for shopping. Also, please leave about three meters to the fence since there will be a hedge."

"Ah, I got the general idea. Is there anything else?"

"Let's see. When thinking about it now, I want you to make a smithy for you next to the workshop. Also, I want to build a bath at the eastern side. It should be large enough for five or six people."

"...A smithy?"

"The things you make are endowed with magic, right? It'd be too dangerous to make tools for the villagers, so I want it hidden in the backyard."

"Understood. I'm an unconditional slave of course, but you even helped my wife, so I'll give it my all."

His black hair swayed when he nodded. His blue eyes shone with a strong will.

--The rest lies in the domain of the construction worker. I'll leave it to him.

"I'll rely on you."

I parted with Melvius after leaving some words of confidence behind.

After that I looked for a suitable place for digging a well.

I can feel the water veins since I'm a water god.

Water was precious in this village. There were about 50 houses, but only three wells.

There was a small streamlet from the river in the east, that flowed into a reservoir, but that water was used for irrigation.

--We need more water now that the farmland has increased.

I also have to do something about that I guess.

For now, I'll need a well for everyday use.

I took advantage of "Clairvoyance" and "Truth Sight", and looked under ground. Unfortunately, there was no vein in the backyard.

Then, I found a vein swelling deep in the ground when I looked around the east side of the plot. It flows from the north east and diverts to the south east.

It shouldn't have an impact on the other wells if I dig the well here.

However, the vein was under a layer of rock. It's a little troubling.

Even if I'd call out to the water to come forth, the rock would be in the way.

However, if I'd break the rock with brute force, the layer of rock will sink in and change the flow of the water.

"Soil, rock, this seems like a job for a Mother Earth God... Maybe I should ask Lapisia."

Molding earth became something like a forte for her when she practiced her God Art.

It should be possible.

I decided to ask her when I find the time.

Chapter 81

Well and irrigation water

The next day.

I went out together with Lapisia in the morning to dig a well.

It'll be between the mansion and the tenement.

I draw a circle with a thick line above the water vein.

"You know what to do? You'll turn the outer circumference to stone and continue downward until you hit the layer of rock. You leave the inside as is at first. Then you turn the inside into sand until you hit water.

"Yup. Got it."

Lapisia crouched down and put her hands on the ground.

mumumu... she began to murmur with a serious face.

"Earth-san... , become stone! --*ha*"

With a *gogogo*, the outer perimeter of the about 1 meter large circle turns to stone and continues downwards.

The outer wall of the well is finished with it hitting the layer of rock. It's like a pipe filled with soil.

"Next, turn the inside into sand."

"Yup!"

She places her hands in the inside of the well and raises her eyebrows.

"Becooooome sand!"

Immediately, the soil begins to turn into sand.

When it reaches the layer of rock, the process slows down and then also turn that into sand.

Finally, she hit the water vein and the water immediately started to ooze out.

"Is this okay?"

"Very good, Lapisia. Well done."

"Aaah"

Lapisia jumped in delight when she was praised. Her blue twin tails rhythmically bounced.

I hold my hands out and cast a spell.

"Gentle wind that obeys me, hoist the sand, dance like a whirlpool in the sky! --'Wind Sand Tornado'"

The air above the well swirled violently.

Lapisia's white dress fluttered in the wind.

The sand whirled upwards and the water inside was spraying around.

The water created a rainbow in the sun.

"Ooooh ~ A rainbow!"

Lapisia smiled and opened her mouth in astonishment.

The tornado only blows the sand mixed with water into the sky and empties the well.

The sand in the well is steadily decreasing.

Once I reached the bottom, I transported the sand to the east and disposed of it outside the village.

When I got back to the well and peeked inside, I was awarded with water in the depth.

It's still muddy since I have just dug it out.

"We can use this for meals, bathing and to water the plants. Thank you, Lapisia."

"That's fun! Let's make more!"

"I'll ask you again when I find another water vein. For now, please help Fioria and Rii."

"Yes!"

Lapisia moved her slender legs and went back to the mansion.

--Which reminds me, I still have to do something about Lapisia's next level.

Next was "Know the sky", if I remember correctly.

Maybe I should let her fly through the sky once, after I'm done with the village's development.

I returned to the mansion while thinking about that.

I reported the construction of the well to Clarissa and Minya.

I asked Haya for a tool to draw water from the well.

It's fairly deep and it would be quite exhausting to work with buckets.

"So, what should I do next?"

I invoked "Clairvoyance" and looked at the village, the fields and a little bit further away.

A streamlet is flowing from the east, creating a large reservoir at the west side of the village.

However, it won't be enough water for all fields as it is now.

"Are you going to secure irrigation water?"

Even if I'd dig another reservoir, there has to be enough water.

Why I'm increasing the farmland?

-- Increasing the farmland will invite more settlers.

I was thinking that it might help to increase my believers if they receive my favor.

I could see an embankment 15 kilometers ahead along the river with "Clairvoyance".

Water is transported over the embankment to create the streamlet.

A wind wheel is used to power the mechanism that draws the water from the river.

--It looks inefficient. Maybe I should ask Haya to replace it with some Golem parts.

I guess I should take accurate measurements first though.

I went outside to the road.

Then I saw the mayor approaching at a quick pace. His long beard is fluttering behind him.

"What's wrong, Mayor? It's rare to see you here."

"Keika-sama, there's a problem. The Vanus church interfered when I applied for the name change."

"What did you say!?"

"Everything related to heroes is under the Vanus Church's jurisdiction, and they won't approve of the renaming without a large donation."

I flicked my tongue.

They are causing trouble without even realizing that they are pawns of the Demon Lord.

"Understood... I'll do something about it. Please continue to talk with the villagers and the town hall."

"Yes, Keika-sama."

Spreading my name will take way longer if I can't change the name to Hero Keika Village. It'll be more difficult to increase my believers.

There's no choice but to persuade a higher authority than the Vanus church, in other words, the king.

But I'll need some bargaining chip. Something of high enough value to silence the church officials.

Isn't there, anything...?

I kept thinking about that while I continued to walk along the road to the east.



I follow the road to the east into the forest.

The sunlight, that falls through the trees, feels pleasant.

There are also few weeds, which makes it easy to walk.

The streamlet doesn't flow through the forest but passes it to the south.

The road ends when I leave the forest and I leisurely walk along the streamlet while receiving the gently breeze of autumn.

For three hours I cross meadows and wasteland.

Then I finally reached the river.

But in the end I didn't came up with any good ideas.

The river drew a gentle curve and was narrower than at the capital.

It's still 15 meters wide though.

Rafts made of logs are floating downstream. The logs are transported to the capital and the port town that way, where the rafts are disassembled and then sold.

The blue sky was reflecting on the river's surface which was glittering blue.

There is a mountain range when advancing further upstream to the northeast. At its foot, furthest in the north, lies the city Kuryuu.

The scenery was magnificent.

The river is curving outwards at this place and made a steep cliff. It's almost like a vertical wall.

"The depth isn't a problem, but I'll need stairs and a pier if I want the Naga's high speed transportation to make a stop here."

Also we'll need a road to the village.

I'll postpone it for now.

"Well then. Maybe I can do something with the wind wheel?"

The wooden wind wheel has a diameter of about five meters and is built at the western side of the embankment. It's squeaking as it rotates.

Wooden buckets, that are attached to a conveyor belt, are filling with water from the river and spill the water to the other side.

The water creates a fountain-like puddle and flows in a streamlet far to the west.

The top of the embankment was partly shaved of from the conveyor belt and wooden boards were put there for it to pass over.

There weren't any problems with the airflow since the wind blew constantly at the river.

But since there was a weight limit, the buckets at the belt came only in intervals of two meters.

The buckets themselves were also small.

Moreover, it already seems to be at its limit.

I wouldn't have any problem to store lots of water in the reservoir with magic, but it would be meaningless if the people couldn't live without me.

I wondered why they didn't make a waterwheel though.

The current is quite strong.

Just when I was thinking that, a ship pulled by a horse came from downstream. The horse was walking on the embankment, and a coldly ringing bell was hanging around its neck.

"We're coming through! Be careful--"

I avoided the horse on the embankment by making a step onto the slanting side.

Ah, I see. They use horses to pull the ships back upstream.

A water wheel would be in the way.

I wonder how the high speed transportation is coming along.

I looked to the south along the river with "Clairvoyance".

Then I caught sight of a construction site at an embankment. The city spread close to the embankment.

A man of Driad Firm is giving out instructions.

It seems like they are constructing a water gate at the embankment to let ships enter the city.

They seem to plan to close the gate at night and stormy weather.

--I see.

But that can only be done since the embankment and the city are close.

Also, demons are inhabiting the river.

It'd be dangerous without any guards.

Moreover, the embankment here is high and the river is curving outwards, so the water pressure is high as well and would eventually break it down. In fact, it looks like the embankment was already reinforced by human hands.

A pier and a water wheel can only be constructed where the water is gently flowing and the embankment is low.

I crossed my arms while I was thinking.

"Hmm~. So a pump might still be the best after all... but what about the power. Should I operate it with magic? Or should I make something like a Golem powered treadmill? That might get in the way though.

-- Also, how long would a Golem Core last?

"It'd be difficult for the villagers to replace the Golem Core if it wears out. Isn't there something simpler...?"

And if I'd ask Haya to make a magic tool, it'll be a weak bargaining chip for the king when it can't be reproduced by the people.

Isn't there anything?

Well, it could be sold as a product of the village, should Haya remain there for a long time, but there's no guarantee for that.

Also, no one won't be able to fix it if it breaks.

I'd like a mechanism to draw water from the river that's easy enough to be repaired by the villagers.

Also, the people surely would be grateful for a long time and I could spread my name if it would get widely adopted.

On the other hand, if it breaks and can't be repaired, it might hurt my reputation, resulting in a reduction of my believers.

I need to spread my name and increase my believers.

That's the most important thing I have to do right now.

The renaming of the village might get accepted and there's even the chance to spread my name through it, if I came up with a simple and easy to use mechanism.

"But I won't come up with something that easily. It'll be impossible for this world's technology to build a pump that'll run forever and won't ever break... Being easy to repair will be a prerequisite."

I looked down at the river and the puddle from the embankment.

The embankment is four or five meters high.

The puddle is lower than the water surface.

"Hm! I see, doesn't the water rise and fall about ten meters? --In that case."

I quickly untie my kimono sash.

I use it to accurately measure the height and width of the embankment.

"This'll work! If it's a siphon."

The water will flow down through a pipe, even if there are obstacles.

If a pipe is filled with water, it will automatically flow to the lower side.

The technique to make pipes exists, so there should be a way to connect them without any gaps as well.

Gaps could be filled if we use metals that are easy to process. I'd like to avoid the usage of metal as much as possible though.

If something like siphons don't exist in this world for irrigation, it would certainly raise my popularity if I'd stick my name onto it.

It's easy to spread and should be a good bargaining chip for the king.

I returned to the village with quick steps.



It took about one hour to get back to the mansion.

The tree-planting has begun in the garden. The trees are too big to be called saplings, but Lapisia easily carries them and puts them into holes.

Fioria then covers them with earth and Lapisia adds some earth magic as finishing touch.

It couldn't be any better.

I quickly enter the residence while looking at their work from the side.

I soon arrived at Celica's room.

"Celica, I'll come in."

"Please come inside, Keika-sama."

Haya was sitting in a corner of the room when I entered.

Celica was sitting at a desk and had spread account books.

I stand next to her and take a peek.

"You keep accounting records?"

"Yes, I wanted to correctly list the income and expenditures since you entrusted me with the money. You don't care about money after all."

"Yeah, I'll leave the money to you. So, there's something I'd like to ask. Do you know siphons?"

"Seyfohns? Is that the name of a someone?"

"Ah, it's a method to draw water from higher to lower places."

Celica tilted her head, so I explained it to her in more detail.

She was breathtakingly impressed after I had finished the explanation.

"To think that there was such a method. This is the first time I heard about it."

"I guess nobody knows of it then, when even you, who received education, don't know about it."

"There might be people who experiment with it, but it's probably more theoretical... but, what about it?"

"I thought about using it as a method to drain water from the river over the embankment."

"I see! It can be used for irrigation water, right?"

Celica was astonished and looked up to me with her round, blue eyes.

"I'll spread this technology. As Keika Water Drawing System."

"Are you selling it to the country?"

"I won't take money. I'll just sell my name."

I'll also use it to promote the renaming.

Celica frowned and looked somewhat sad for some reason.

"...Keika-sama. I'm, a little concerned."

"What's wrong?"

"I know, that it's for you to become a Valor God, but I feel, that you're too fixated on selling your name..."

Huh, haven't I told her yet?

"I have to gather 50.000 believers to be able to defeat the Demon Lord. Moreover, within one year."

"So that's what it was! I'm sorry to selfishly speak up without knowing."

Her blond hair swayed when she lowered her head.

I put my hand on her shoulder while she was sitting and hugged her. The feel of her big breasts is transmitted to me.

"It's my fault for not telling you. So, please continue to support me."

"Ah... yes, Keika-sama"

I pressed her head against my stomach.

I gently pat her head. Her blond hair warms my fingertips.

I suddenly felt a gaze, and when I shifted my attention, Haya was staring at us from the corner of the room.

"Am I, bothering you?"

"Ah, it's okay. Please don't mind us. --I won't mind, even if seen in public!"

Celica trembles in my arms.

"Keika-sama... it-it's a joke, right?"

"Do you want to give it a try?"

"*Ah*! --I'm out for now!"

Celica was startled and ran away. Her red skirt was waving when she went out of the room.

Only Haya and I are left in the room.

The four heads small Haya tilted her head.

"Shouldn't you chase after her?"

"That would be counterproductive. Well, enough of that, I'd like to talk about the further proceedings once the workshop in the backyard is done."

"What is it--?"

"You'd be seen by people if you leave through the front door when going to the workshop in the rear. And letting you stay at the workshop might be dangerous, should you'd be assaulted. That's why I thought about connecting the room in the residence and the workshop with a fairy door.

"Sounds like a good idea."

"Also, is it possible to make a fairy door to the capital?"

It'll shorten the traveling time if it can be done.

It'll make things easier, even if it can only be used by the hero party.

It would be even better if it wouldn't take several weeks to go to the neighboring countries. And if I could go to the neighboring continents without a ship.

"Not directly. A fairy door can only connect over a distance of about ten to 20 meters at best."

--I see.

Maybe that's why the slave trader was only as deep as the fourth floor underground.

"You said, that it doesn't work directly?"

"You can go everywhere if you move through the fairy world. But..."

"It was destroyed, right? I see, that might have been the reason. So the heroes can't freely move through the world."

"Is that so? The fairies are extremely in trouble because of that."

"I'd like to do something about it... How is the fairy world at the moment?"

"It's a demon graveyard. It's a disposal site. There's an earth-shattering amount of undead."

Hundreds of thousand or even millions of undead seem to be roaming about according to her.

"I guess I don't have another choice but to reclaim the fairy world. Might Orphelie actually have meant fairy doors when she spoke to me of something hidden of great importance in the fairy world?"

"The princess and people who have her permission can set up as many doors as they like."

"I see... Conversely, it'd be a disaster if it would fall into the Demon Lord's army's hands. Enough to die for."

"Yes. The princess had resolved herself."

"I'd like to regain the fairy world. Also for the fairies. But let's return to the previous talk. I need a ship."

"A ship? I always wanted to try that!"

"You can build one? Then, can you build a paddle steamer?"

"Paddle steamer?"

"Ah, it's a ship that moves by having water mills at its sides."

I briefly explained to her what a paddle steamer is.

A broad smile spreads on Haya's face.

"Heh--. That's interesting. It's too bad, but I don't think, that there's something with enough power to move the water wheels."

"If it's about that, we're in luck. I have some cores of Magic Golems."

Haya's round eyes were sparkling.

"As expected of you, Keika-san. You stand up to your words. I think I'll enjoy staying at your side."

"Then I'm glad. I'll rely on you in the future. After this, can you please draw a blueprint for the Keika Water Drawing System, that I mentioned to Celica before? It should be simple enough for humans to make."

"Yees. That's an easy task."

"I'll leave it to you."

I left the room thereafter.

As soon as I had closed the door, Haya unfolded some paper and moved her pen.

I should be able to silence the Vanus Church with this.

Chapter 82

Name selling at the capital

I went to the capital Chloe the next day.

People and carriages are going back and forth on the stone paved main street.

The capital felt very crowded after staying at the quiet village.

I only planned to stay for the day, hence I took neither Minya nor Lapisia along.

I brought the staple boy Bailey instead.

I took Celica and went to the royal castle.

To meet the king for negotiations.

--Of course, with the Keika Water Drawing System as bargaining chip.

I met with the king in the audience hall on the second floor. Celica is kneeling diagonally behind me.

"It's been a while, King-sama."

"Yes. Since the incident with the dragon. I'm still waiting for the report."

--Ah, I forgot about that.

I dodged his questioning gaze while stroking my cheek.

"That will come later on... I came with a request today."

"Oh, a request?"

"I have a certain useful technology and like you to spread it as Keika Water Drawing System. Also, I'd like you to acknowledge the renaming of the village I currently live at to Keika Village."

I asked the mayor about the progress on changing the village's name in the morning before I headed out.

It seems to have become difficult after the Vanus Church had butted in.

-- The Demon Lord's shadow alone is really annoying.

The king strokes his long beard while he speaks.

"Hmm... I don't mind changing the name. But exactly what technology could be of that high value?"

"It's right here."

I took out two glass containers with colored water that were connected by a transparent tube.

"This is?"

"It's a simple explanation for the Keika Water Drawing System. The water is drained from above to below without the need for any external power."

"Oh. Can you explain it to me in more detail?"

The king almost falls down when he enthusiastically steps forward from his throne. He seems to be that curious.

I gave a brief explanation. The water flows from above to below, even if there are obstacles in the way as long as the pipe is filled with water.

The flow of water can be stopped with a valve and when the valve is opened again, the water continues to flow.

I explained, that it could be used to irrigate the agricultural land.

The king strongly nods.

"We are already were aware of that phenomenon, but didn't grasp it in such detail. I approve of renaming the village to "Hero Keika Village" and swear to spread the "Keika Water Drawing System" throughout the country.

--Very well! As expected of the king.

I can now rename the village without making a large donation to the Vanus Church.

I deeply bowed to hide my grinning face.

"The people will certainly be delighted. Thank you very much, Hero-sama. The water

drawing restrictions are still applying though."

"What do you mean?"

"Drawing too much water from the rivers would have an impact on the ecosystem and daily lives. Especially the ship traffic would be in danger, so be careful not to draw too much water.

"I see. I'll be careful."

I lowered my head again after receiving the words of the king.

Then I left the throne room.

I thought about visiting him again in the evening to have a more detailed talk.



After that, we did some shopping, ate lunch and headed to the slave trader.

To increase the village's manpower.

Celica was still eating the sweet honey-dipped fried bean curd bread while walking next to me.

Her cheeks are slightly red, maybe because she isn't accustomed to eat while walking.

"*chew*... It's really sweet and delicious."

Celica smiles while bread crumbs are sticking next to her lovely lips.

"That's good to hear. --You have bread crumbs sticking to your face."

"Eh!?"

I picked them up and ate them before Celica was able to wipe her face.

"They're gone."

"Ah... Sh-Shank you vewwy much."

Celica chewed. She casts her eyes down and her cheeks become increasingly red. Her blond hair sticks to her cheeks.

I show the "Proof of Hero" when we arrive at the slave trader and step inside.

He looks kind of gloomy and deals with us while rubbing his hands together.

"Thank you for your patronage, Hero-sama. What business do you have today?"

"I thought about increasing my working forces. Ah, by the way, did you hear about any sinners?"

"There was someone found who grew up in a village to the east. But she was attacked by demons and died when she was brought to the capital."

"Did she live in hiding?"

"No, she was just a normal sinner who lived at a remote place.

--Although everyone is judged when born, there seem to be some villages in the east that aren't in reach of the Vanus Church.

Maybe I should go there once.

"Is that so... it's too bad, but it can't be helped. --Now then, please show me your slaves."

"Yes, this way please."

I was guided to the back of the building.

About ten slaves were chained together in a dimly lit room.

I looked at each slave with "Truth Sight".

There are four conditional slaves.

They were a carpenter, a maid, a warrior and a farming instructor. They'd immediately be useful at the village.

Then there were six unconditional slaves. They were strong men and skilled women.

There were also an alcoholic and a bandit. They are obviously out of question.

"Let's see. I'll take everyone except those two. How much will that be?"

"Oh, as expected of the hero! In total, the eight people cost 154 big gold coins."

--Expensive.

I thought about haggling for a moment, but decided on said price after remembering

how I ripped him off last time.

"Celica, how much do you have at hand?"

"I think about 80 big gold coins..."

"Then we'll pay 54 now and the remaining money will be delivered later."

"Oh. You don't want to bargain?"

"Do you want to go out of business?"

"Not at all. But since you're a hero, I'll give you a discount of ten percent, so let's make it 40 now and 100 later."

Maybe it's still part of the hush money to keep silent about the former incident of "bringing demons to the capital".

I nodded.

"Alright. Let's do this."

I dealt with the formalities and brought the slaves outside.

I spoke while the afternoon sun was pouring down.

"Well then, I want you to support Keika Village. The slave head Clarissa will tell you your respective tasks."

""Yes, Hero-sama""

--A woman looked uneasy, maybe because of the bulk purchase.

For the time being, I asked Bailey to prepare the wagon and bring them to the village.

Celica speaks while watching the wagon.

"Aren't we going home together with them?"

"I still have a small business to attend. Let's go to Kynmerick's inn."

"Yes"

We walked down the street and headed to Kynmerick's inn.

Kynmerick's inn was still as popular as ever, although it was only afternoon.

Lionel greets us with the blunt smile of a boy.

"Welcome-- Let me guide you to the counter."

He guided us to the counter with polished movements.

Kynmerick came out of the kitchen and spoke.

"Oh, Keika. How rare, it's just the two of you?"

"Yeah, a small urgent business came up. I plan to stay the night."

Lionel speaks.

"Then, I'll prepare the room."

"I leave it to you."

His blond hair swayed while he went up the stairs.

Kynmerick speaks while serving tea.

"You spoke of an urgent business, what did you come here for?"

"To meet with the king and buy some slaves. Please tell Driad to deliver 100 big gold coins when he visits."

"Again? Haven't you built the residence already?"

"I wanted some people to work at the village."

"Oh. I heard some rumors. You seem to do some interesting things."

"Please help to spread my name even further."

"I don't mind, now I also want to visit it once."

"It's not done yet. I'll contact you once it's ready to invite visitors."

"It's something you're doing after all. I look forward to it."

Kynmerick laughed heartily while stroking his short beard.

Lionel returned.

"The room is prepared."

"Thank you."

I took Celica and headed to the room.

It's the same room as always, a large room on the third floor.

There is a king size bed.

"I wonder whether this room is used by anyone besides us."

"Who knows. It might just be expensive to rent."

I spoke while looking at the bed.

Come to think of it, it's been a while since we we've been alone, hasn't it?"

"Ah... th-that's right."

Celica blushed and turned away.

I sit down on the bed. Celica sits down next to me.

"It's still only been several months since we met and I became a hero..."

"Yes... you're amazing, Keika-sama."

"And now I have to increase my believers, make a holy sword, build a ship, reclaim the fairy world, reclaim Edelstein and defeat the Demon Lord. When thinking about it, it's still a long way."

"It's alright. If it's you, you can do it. I'll also help you even though I can't do much."

"I'm relying on you the most."

"Yes!"

Celica squinted as she smiled.

-- Let's do it one after another.

I felt like I could still work even harder while looking at her smile.

Chapter 83

Audience at evening and a feeble wish

Late at evening.

I left the inn after dinner and headed to the castle.

The pedestrian traffic on the streets had decreased. A drunk man walks while singing a song.

I went to the southern side of the castle, invoked flying magic and landed on the balcony on the top floor.

It was the king's private room.

Only the lamp at the bedside was dimly lit when I entered the bedroom.

The king was drinking in the bed. He's wearing a nightcap.

"Good evening, King-sama. I came to talk."

"You always suddenly appear."

"I'm a hero after all."

I was urged to sit at the bedside and sat down.

The king sipped at his drink.

"So, I guess you want to talk about something that you don't want others to hear about when you sneak in like this?"

"As expected of you, King-sama. Should I talk about the truth about the dragon first?"

"Well. I'm certainly curious."

I talked about how I searched for the eggs that were stolen from the dragon by the Demon Lord's army, how their content is influenced by those who warm them and that they might give birth to disasters like starvation or mass panic if warmed by demons.

"There are eggs that bring forth disasters? Didn't you say that a treasure was stolen?"

"I couldn't tell the truth because people were around."

"I see. Have you recovered all?"

"I'm only halfway yet. Three are still left. I asked Leo to look for them."

"Hmm. That young man, huh. It seems I lost a youngster with a promising future. You did a good job, Keika."

"By the way, might you have heard rumors about the remaining eggs? --They are about this size."

I showed the size with my hands.

The king tilted his head.

"Hmm. There was a merchant who brought a round ball of about that size. It wasn't black though. It was red with golden stripes, and the merchant said that it was a phoenix."

"Eh!? Is that true!? What have you done with the egg?"

"I refused because he requested a ridiculous price. I told him to try it at other aristocrats."

"Thank you very much, King-sama. Just that information is helpful."

"Maybe I should also discreetly investigate."

--I also thought about asking Kynmerick and Driad.

The king spoke.

"But, you said that you couldn't talk about the eggs while people were present, does that mean that there are people among my subordinates who are leaking information to the Demon Lord?"

"There's no proof. --But, it's already dangerous enough with the Vanus Church around."

"How can you say so? Isn't he a god who caused many miracles?"

"Ah, that's a self-made performance. The true identity of the Demon Lord is Vanus after

all."

"Wh... what!? Is that true!?"

"It's definitely true since I heard it directly from the Ocean God Lilille."

Then I talked about Vanus while omitting considerable parts.

I also kept silence about how Lilille lost the holy sword.

The king listened with his hand at his forehead. He looked worn out.

"That the Vanus Church itself is moving at the Demon Lord's will... moreover, the priests are working without knowing the truth. This is troublesome. I get why you're wary of my subordinates."

"Which reminds me. King Ronheim was manipulated by the demons and the defense minister was replaced by a Magic Doll when I went to the Fabrica Kingdom."

"So that's what was happening? I heard rumors that they were about to go to war, but to think that the Demon Lord was behind it... They might have chosen that way because that country doesn't follow the Vanus Faith but the god of fire and smithing, Kandence."

"Even if the Demon Lord is defeated, there won't be true peace as long as the Vanus Church is around."

"Understood. I express my gratitude for telling me, Keika. I'll also think about a counterplan against the Vanus Church. Maybe something can be done now that the Demon Lord's leadership is crumbling."

"Thank you very much, King-sama. I'll help wherever I can."

"Is there anything else you want to tell?"

"Let's see... I thought about going to the frontier continents, so I want to build a ship."

"Oh... that'll cost a lot of money... Maybe I can give some financial assistance for your achievement since we'll be able to cultivate new agricultural land with the Keika Water Drawing System."

"Thank you very much."

The king frowned.

"Also, there's the thing with Etoile."

"What about the princess?"

"She grew up to be very arrogant, but she became very modest after being rescued by you. She also doesn't look down on the people anymore. I'm really grateful. Thank you."

The king's nightcap swung when he lowered his head. There was no kingly dignity but only the gratitude of a father.

My heart hurt for a moment, given that the truth was somewhat different.

"No, it's alright, King-sama. I only did what was expected of a hero. *hahaha*"

"As expected of you, Keika."

"Well, whatever. Now then, it's time for me to return."

"Please let me know when something comes up again."

"Yes, I'll visit again. Good night."

Now I felt like running away and quickly left the room.

I stepped out onto the balcony and was about to return to the inn.

Then, I heard a voice from the neighboring balcony.

I turned my head in surprise, and there was Etoile with her red hair, that reached until her back, fluttering in the evening wind. She's wearing a dress-like negligee.

"Ke-Keika-sama!?"

"Ah, Etoile. Please keep it to yourself that you've seen me. I only came to talk to the king."

"Is that so?... How about coming to my room?"

"I really shouldn't sneak into a princess's room."

She puffed her cheeks sulkily when I said this.

"Although you are spending the nights with Celica who's also a princess..."

I walk along the balcony to Etoile's side.

"We're only often sleeping together because it feels good to embrace her, but we're not doing anything."

"E-Embrace...! Ah, of course, I know! Celica is a lot cuter than I after all. I'm really sorry."

"If you mean, that you rarely come across such large breasts, then you're right."

"*Sniff*"

Etoile looks sorrowful as she puts her hand on her small chest.

Now that I look closely, her negligee is transparent. I could clearly perceive the shape of her firm breasts and underwear-less body line. She has a delicate body with modest curves.

Although her breasts are small, they are well balancing with her slender arms and legs.

"You are cute enough as you are, don't worry."

Etoile came closer without trying to conceal her naked body that could be seen through the negligee.

"Ke-Keika-sama."

"Hm?"

"You'll defeat the Demon Lord someday, right?"

"Of course."

"Then... with me... ugh."

She cast her eyes downward while her cheeks got red from embarrassment.

Now she looked even smaller than she already is.

"Ah--. The hero is supposed to marry the princess after he defeated the Demon Lord, huh."

"Yes... My big sister is already married, so..."

"I see. Rejected."

"Too fast... please, Keika-samaaa."

She clings to me and looks up to me with teary eyes. Her modest bulges are pushing against me.

"I already have Celica. I wouldn't have become a hero and wouldn't have done a lot of things if not for Celica, who was by my side and supported me. I can't betray her."

"Is, that so..."

She feebly presses her face against me.

"Is something wrong?"

"If I won't marry you, I'll... have to politically marry into the Fabrica Kingdom."

"It's common though, you don't like it?"

"He's a really unsightly man... he doesn't think of people as people and always looks down on them."

"Sounds just like your former self, huh."

Her face distorted from shock. Tears are flowing from her violet eyes over her cheeks.

"Just as you told me to, I apologized to my nanny and attendants for all the terrible things I did. Some got angry but others forgave me. Some of them were even happy. I was taught that people can't live alone."

"That's right."

--Well, that's also true for myself.

"Thank you very much for letting me realize what's important. I'm really sorry. It might be the punishment for my selfish behavior. I'm sorry to speak out of my own convenience."

She tried to separate from me after telling this, but I put my arms around her thin waist and hugged her strongly.

"*Ah*", a delicate voice leaks out of Etoile's lips. Her red hair was swaying and disheveled.

I bring my mouth close to her ear.

"You can't become my legal wife since it'll become a matter of succession. Because once the inheritance rights are with your children they'll surely back the Daphnes Kingdom. Then the small Edelstein country won't be a match anymore. -- Well, I might just kidnap you on the spur of the moment."

"Keika-samaaa... please."

"That wish, I'll keep it in the corner of my heart"

I kissed her on the forehead and separated my hands.

Etoile is one step apart from me. Her transparent negligee flutters in the night wind. She looks up at me with a heartrending face.

"Keika-sama, I'll be waiting"

"...See you"

I flew from the balcony back onto the nightly street.



I went back to the inn.

Kynmerick was still preparing for the next day in the kitchen, so I asked him to use his connections to merchants to search for the eggs.

Celica was still awake when I entered the room on the third floor.

She was lying face down on the king size bed and reading a book. She had placed her chin on the pillow to relieve her breasts.

"Welcome back, Keika-sama"

"I'm back... I met with the king and princess Etoile"

"How was it?"

"I talked about the eggs and Vanus with the king. He was really astonished."

"That the Demon Lord is Vanus... it's frightening."

Celica frowned.

I lie down next to Celica and gently hold her shoulders.

"After that I met Etoile. She begged me to marry her."

"...Etoile-sama, she's cute, right?"

"I think that you're cuter though..."

Celica's cheeks are blushing behind her blond hair as she gazes down.

"Ah... don't say that while looking that serious..."

"Then, should I rather say something like '*uhehe*', Celicaaa, you cutie' while drooling with an insincere attitude?"

"Definitely not!"

Celica strongly shook her head. Her blond hair hits me.

"By the way, Etoile was wearing a transparent negligee. Is that normal for royalty? Should I buy you one as well?"

--Or rather, I want her to wear it.

"Eh!? Etoile was looking like that?... Then she's being married off, huh. It might be part of the bridal training."

"Is that so?... Maybe that's why she looked so forlorn... Do you really not want to wear one?"

"I-I don't think I have to... yet."

Celica murmured anxiously while looking at me.

I put my arms around her shoulders and hug her tightly.

Celica pants awkwardly while diverting her gaze.

"Celica. I only want you to know this. --No matter what anyone says, you're the most important to me."

"...what has come over you suddenly? Did something happen with Etoile?"

"Ugh... No, not really."

Celica stretched out her arms and hugged me.

"You're tired, aren't you, Keika-sama? You really should relax from time to time."

She speaks in a gentle tone. Her soft body presses against me.

My heart feels calm by Celica's warmth that is transmitted through the skin.

We kept embracing each other in silence until late at night.

Chapter 84

Progress at the village and robbery

Three days later at Keika Village.

The construction of the Keika Water Drawing System, that I had asked Haya to make, was complete.

The flowing water increased to two or three times the amount.

We're still using the wind wheel along with it. But not because of the water but because it might act as a landmark for passing ships.

For now, I asked Lapisia to make a new reservoir for the increased water.

It'll be to the southwest of the existing one.

At the western edge of the new agricultural land.

I also made it with the thought of further expanding the farmland in mind.

Lapisia put her hands on the ground, and with a simple shout of "*ha*", the lake-like basin was complete.

"Can you make it square?"

"Yup!"

With a further rumbling sound of *gogogo*, the huge rectangular pool was done.

After that we dug the canal and connected it to the reservoir.

The sound of the water can be heard when it flows inside.

"Is this alright?"

"Of course. Well done. Good girl!"

She smiled happily with "*ehehe*" when I stroked her head with her blue hair.

Lapisia is unbeatable when it comes to civil engineering work.

She's truly a Mother Earth God.

The other party was also done with the tree-planting in the garden around the residence.

Just looking at the greenery that surrounds the shrine feels refreshing.

Lapisia played an active part here as well.

Lapisia spoke when she looked at the not yet grown hedge.

"Why did you plant this?"

"This'll become a green wall of about two meters. First it has to grow though--"

"Then, I'll grow it!"

Lapisia puts her hands on the ground and sends magical power through them. The power feels like that of a gentle mother.

The hedge grew a little when she did this. Even the smallest plants were now at least one meter high.

-- Could we use this power for the fields as well?

Fioria stares in amazement.

"Isn't that the power of 'Fertility'? It can't be, Lapisia-chan is a Mother Earth--
mmm!"

I covered her full lips with my hand.

Then I realized my blunder.

--Damn!

It's just like saying that she's correct if I keep her from speaking.

I removed my hand and looked into her green eyes while I spoke.

"Don't tell anyone!"

"Ye-Yes, Keika-sama-- You also mustn't tell, Rii!"

"Yup, got it. I won't tell."

"It's a secret just between us."

"Ah... Yes, Keika-sama"

Fioria's cheeks blushed for some reason.

Rii also blushed while fidgeting.

"A-A shared secret... just like a vow between husband and wife..."

"Don't interpret it like that!"

Fioria pulled Rii's hand while scolding her and they went into the mansion.

Only Lapisia remains by my side.

Her eyes are sparkling like that of a puppy.

"Ah, well done. You're truly a good girl."

"Hooray"

Lapisia jumped happily.

Unrelated to her being a Mother Earth God and being essential for the outcome of the world, I'm glad that she's such an obedient child.

Lapisia rushed outside after her work was done.

She seems to be playing with the village's children.

I warned her to not go all out should she get involved in a quarrel.

I entered the mansion and went to Fal's room.

She kept making small bags that could fit in the hand as she was told.

They are piling up in a corner of the room. There were hundreds.

"It seems to be going well"

"Yes, I'm doing my best!... But, what do you intend to do with such small bags? They can't be used as purses or something like that."

"Let's see-- I guess you can slowly move on to the next task."

"What will that be?"

I take out a small wooden board with symbols written on it. It's just large enough to fit inside one of the small bags.

"Make the same wooden boards with the symbols written on them like this one and

put them into the bags."

"Eh... yes.

Fal's blond hair swayed when she tilted her head in puzzlement.

It couldn't be helped that she didn't understand it. It was written in Japanese after all.

It's the same pattern that I asked Fal before to embroider onto the small bags.

"Talisman" is written on them.

When speaking of shrines, you can't leave out written oracles, talismans and charms.

I plan to handle them.

Once completed, I'll be able to hear the wishes when they're made while the talisman is held.

It depends on my mood whether I'll grant them though.

"I plan to sell them. --By the way, did you receive one of the pendants that Haya made?

"Yes. It's a beautiful pattern. Thank you very much, Keika-sama."

She pulled on the chain around her neck and took out the magic silver plate with the engraved magic circles."

It was given a design that won't interfere with the magic circles.

It was the pendant that deceives the sinner judgement devices.

"Always keep it close to you."

"Yes. But... , this was the first time I got such a wonderful present from a man... Moreover, the only others who received one are Celica-san and Rii-san... That's what it means, right?"

Maybe because Fal had misunderstood something, she shyly let her body wriggle while her cheeks got red.

--Well, I'm not displeased with it if she's happy.

"Well then, I leave it to you."

"Yes, Keika-sama! I'll work hard!"

I left the room after Fal grabbed a small bag and replied.

I go behind the residence.

The workshop and the smithy were completed in the backyard.

The workshop and smithy were smelling of wood.

It was thanks to the added carpenter and Haya, who was helping at night, that they were completed that fast.

I was surprised to see that Melvius had finished way faster than planned.

"Keika-san, we're already done... It's like I'm dreaming."

"Very well. Next, please make the bath. And after that extend the tenement. Furthermore, I want you to build an inn to the south of the residence."

"An inn? Does a village without any sights need something like that?"

I smirked.

"I need a facility where many people can stay."

"If you say so... I'll complete it as soon as possible."

"I'll rely on you"

I planned to make the harvest festival grand and wanted to invite people from the surrounding villages and the capital.

I need accommodations for that.

But that's not all. I have a lot more plans.

This village is located far in the north of the kingdom, close to the Demon Lord's territory.

As a result, there are few people and a lot of wasted land.

It leaves lots of space for development.

A variety of ideas come to mind. I also want a store and a blacksmith for the village.

--Well then, I have to visit the mayor."

I headed to the mayor's house in the center of the village.



The village chief was in the courtyard of the L-shaped building and was checking materials and goods.

"Ah, if this isn't Keika-sama!"

"It's quite lively, huh."

"The ordered goods for the festival have arrived."

"Can you tell me about the festival?"

"This courtyard will be the main venue. First we pick up Lupersia-sama's shrine and offer our gratitude while walking along the fields."

"Heh."

-- It's like a portable shrine.

"When the altar returns, the instruments begin to play and the villagers are all dancing together.

-- This is like a bon festival dance.

"Heh. We can also take the opportunity to announce the renaming of the village to Hero Keika Village."

"That sounds reasonable. The negotiations were halting for a while but suddenly the discussions progressed and the renaming was accepted."

"That's good to hear."

-- It's most likely because I asked the king to act as a mediator.

-- The biggest problem has been solved. Next is the construction of buildings and then my name should spread once the people increase.

--Very well.

The mayor speaks.

"We also invited a theater troupe from the capital and there will be stalls where cooks will offer free food. It'll be quite lively."

"Will the festival continue into the night?"

"We'll light lots of large bonfires."

"I see. It'll be quite large-scale, huh."

"People from the neighboring villages will come as well. That's why we made this courtyard to be the main venue."

"I see. I think I have a general idea of the course of the festival--hm?"

I saw a group of men in the courtyard who weren't villagers.

They were five adventurers. A warrior and a swordsmen who were wearing armors, an explorer who was carrying a bow, a mage and a monk."

"Is something wrong, Keika-sama?"

"Who are these men?"

"They are hired adventurers."

"Oh. Do you need to exterminate something?"

"No. Thieves and demons are attacking the villages at this time of the year, aiming for the wheat that was harvested. So we hired them for protection."

"Is there something like that? I see."

At that moment, a single man came running inside the courtyard.

"Mayor of Keika Village, there's an emergency!"

"Oh, aren't you the son of the mayor of Roni?"

"Roni Village was attacked by a group of demons! The barrier is dangerously close to breaking down. There are more than hundred demons!"

"What!? A hundred?"

--If there are hundred demons, they'd have enough war potential to even invade a town with an outer wall.

The mayor looks at me.

"Hero-sama... this village only has enough to protect itself."

"I know. We can't abandon them though, so I'll head out. Which road do I have to take?"

"You leave to the west and follow that road for a while, it will then fork to the northwest. That road leads to Roni Village."

"Got it. Tell Celica... no, tell Minya to assist the villagers. Tell Celica to protect the village. Let the villagers organize a defense party to protect the village and a relief squad for Roni Village."

"Yes"

-- The princess Celica is better suited to command the defense than Minya.

I rushed out in a hurry. The hem of my clothes are fluttering.

I met Lapisia who was playing with the children in the outskirts on the way.

"What's wrong, Keika?"

"It seems that the village to the northwest is attacked, so I'm going to help them."

"I'll also go!"

Lapisia's eyes were sparkling while she made fists with her small hands.

I thought about it for a moment but immediately rejected it.

"No, I don't know anything about the enemy's fighting strength. It'll be dangerous if everyone leaves and they attack this village with a detached force. You'll protect this village."

"Yes, Keika! I'll protect everyone!"

Lapisia clenched her fist while she was breathing in excitement.

"Please tell the mayor to investigate whether other villages have been attacked."

"Yup!"

I started running again with the obedient reply in my back.

I leave the village and run westwards.

The road passes the yellow wheat fields.

I could see the curving road that leads to the northwest along the way.

I follow that road while I'm still running. I murmured as soon as I couldn't see the village anymore.

--'Gale legs'

I whirled up clouds of dust when I dashed at highest speed.

After running for about three minutes.

I could see the village beyond a gently sloping hill.

It would have taken several hours when walking.

Houses are built around a large pond at the foot of a mountain.

Smoke is rising at several places in the village.

People are fighting at the village while others have already fallen.

It seems that most of the villagers are fleeing to a stone church.

Lizard- and frog-demons are coming from the pond. The assault is spearheaded by demon beasts from the north and west.

A little bit further away, fox and cat beastfolks led by bear demons are loading bags filled with wheat onto carriages. Their number is about 50.

It seems to be just like the mayor said and they are aiming for the harvest.

They took wheat, barley and soba when I looked at it with "Truth Sight".

The number of demons in the village itself is less than hundred and they are scattered about, so it'll take some time to annihilate them.

"I'll still need some time to reach the village."

It looks like the number of deaths will increase in the meantime.

I'd like to do something, even if it only saves a single person.

I picked up a stone from the roadside and threw it.

pashuu!!

It broke the sound barrier and flew straight.

An explosion occurred on the road in the village and the head of a beast demon that looked like a platoon captain was blown off.

A little later, the sound of the explosion was echoing with *dogoon*.

I threw stones at the strong guys that I made out with "Truth Sight".

I also threw them to the places where the villagers were outnumbered. The demon beasts were blown away.

At one time, a home run was hit by a demon that looked like a pig-human, but all other stones hit their targets.

I also shot down guys that looked like monkeys who were climbing the roof of the church.

I reduced those I could clearly make out as demons by half.

There's a reason why I'm not using magic.

My water and wind just aren't flashy enough.

The tremors, smoke and explosions that frightened everyone not only caused damage but also threw the enemy into confusion.

The surprised demons stopped moving. The disorder spread as they didn't know what was happening.

The trailing troops stopped to advance as they froze from the thunderous roars.

Of course, I also took down the commanding bear demons with some splinters.

The villagers were also surprised, but they raised their voices once they understood that the stones only targeted the demons.

"Reinforcements have arrived!" "We're saved!" "All strong guys are dead, we can do this" "Let's push them back"

"*Oooh*", the villagers were in high spirits and attacked.

--Alright, it worked.

I picked up some stones, put them into my pocket and rushed toward the village.

Chapter 85

The reason for the attack

I entered Roni Village where the fight continued.

I run on the cobblestone road.

First I head to the east of the pond.

The Lizardmen are causing the greatest damage.

Their scales were hard, so they couldn't be defeated by the villagers.

"--'Wind Blade Grant'"

I cut them down with my Tachi while running through them.

"*Gugyaaa!*" "What--*gua!*" "*Gufu!!*"ran

Blood splashed and three of them collapsed.

"One! Man! Surround!"

Five Lizardmen lined up in a row to the voice of their captain.

It was a quite composed movement-- However.

"That's convenient for me--'Gale Slash'!"

I swing my Tachi horizontally.

zaann!

"*Gyaaa!*" "*Gugieeee!*"

With a single swing of my Tachi, the Lizardmen collapsed while the blood was spurting.

A warrior-like man was exhaustedly kneeling on the ground and muttered.

"Wh-What strength... who are you?"

"I'm Keika. I'm a hero."

I smiled while I held my Tachi up high.

To not cut down the man.

"--'Gale Revolting Blade'"

I slashed at some Lizardmen in the distance.

I chanted "Recovery" on the man and the surrounding people while I spoke.

"This place should be save now. You should hide inside a house until reinforcements arrive."

"Understood... Please help the others."

"Leave it to me"

I ran and headed to the next battlefield. Of course I cut down the demons I encountered on the way.

The south side of the pond.

Some Frogmen were making a fire in front of the church.

The monkey demons and their dead companions were lying in the surroundings. They were the ones that I had shot down when they had climbed the church's roof. The platoon leader was among them.

It seemed that the Frogmen were acting on their own now without their captain.

"It looks like there are only women and children inside. Let's grill them, *kekeke*"

"It's tasty when they have some fat. *hihihi*"

"The order was not to kill any people if possible, but I don't think we have to listen to that."

"Who knows whether we can snatch the harvest away next year, we should eat now!"

They ignited the timber and it became an open fire.

"No, you guys will burn."

"What?"

"Who is it?"

"There's no point in telling."

"What was that!?"

"Oh wind, blow! --'Roaring wind'"

gooooo!!

The open fire flares up.

The flame caught the Frogmen like the tongue of a monster.

"*Gigeee!*" "*Gyaaaa!*"

They got scorched in an instant and died.

The fire burned out immediately without spreading to the church.

I look inside the church with "Clairvoyance".

A long desk is placed in front of the door and several middle-aged women are holding it down.

There are many women, children and old people.

They had gathered around the altar and were holding onto each other.

I ran to the west side of the pond after seeing that they were alright.

There are many villagers in the west.

The villagers had taken up their farm tools and were fighting to prevent the wheat from being taken away.

They were able to push the enemies back because they flinched from the stone bombardment.

The beastfolks are having a hard time fighting while carrying the crops.

There are also some beastfolks who are abandoning their wheat bags and flee.

A two meters tall, fat pig demon is swinging a pillar-like club and yells.

"Don't falter *Squeak*! If you run, take the bags with you! *Squeak*"

Three villagers were sent flying just by being grazed by the club that the pig demon swung around.

Not only his physique but also his strength was in a different league.

A mage who looked like an adventurer was pointing at the pig and shouted.

"Fireball!"

A red fireball is born and aims for the pig!

"Oh! --'Spiral Tornado'!"

The pig demon held his club in its center and swung it violently like a fan.

Just by doing this, a swirl of wind was created and the fireball bounced off.

dogoon!

It fell to the feet of the swordsmen and the villagers and exploded.

"*Uwaa!*" "*Gyaa!*" "*Daaamn*"

"The villagers were blown away.

It's powerful.

It seems that the returned fireball and the wind were accumulating to cause such a large explosion.

An adventurer who was near the pig is also blown off by the whirlwind.

"Sh-Shiit...! For such a strong guy to be here!"

An armor wearing knight dropped his sword and fell to his knees.

The pig demon shouts.

"I'm of the proud Piggard tribe *Squeak*! Don't put me together with weak humans and low demons!"

--Is that the guy who repelled my stone?

I walked briskly and looked at him.

[Status]

Name: Gurumon

Race: Piggard Tribe

Job: Regimental commander of the Demon Lord Army's beastfolk corps and beastfolk district governor

Attributes: "Wicked Wind" "Darkness"

Attack strength: 3500

Defense strength: 2200

Vitality: 5000

Mental strength: 300

[Skills]

Down swing

Storm Down

Spiral Tornado

Pressure Down

"Heh. You're quite strong."

"Who are you?!"

"I'm the hero Keika."

"Hero!! I'll become one of the Four Heavenly Kings if I defeat you *Squeak*! Diiie!"

He was drooling from his face while he kicked the ground.

His giant body was rising toward the sky.

The sun is in his back when he swings down his club that is engulfed in wind.

--Pressure Down, huh.

A heavy blow with weight.

Any weapon would be crushed normally.

"Well, normally --'Water Blade Grant'"

I make my Tachi glow blue and cut diagonally upward from below.

zann!

I cut him together with the club from the waist to his shoulder in two.

"Whaaat--*Squeeeeak!*"

He makes a strange sound, scatters blood and tumbles to to ground.

"I'll give you at least credit for your strength."

"To cut through my technique... *ua* *gulp*"

Blood spewed from his mouth when he exhaled.

The surroundings fall silent from astonishment.

A knight, whose armor is rattling, speaks.

"What, was that, just now... I couldn't grasp the movements of the sword with my eyes..."

The villagers are muttering.

"Amazing... --He killed him with a single blow" "Th-This is a hero!" "Thank you very much, Hero-samaaa!"

"Are you okay?"

I walk leisurely and heal them with "Recovery".

The gathered beastfolks panicked.

"*Uwa!*" "The governor is...!" "Run away, run away!"

The fox and cat beastmen started to run while they screamed.

Some of them were carrying bags with wheat.

"*Aa!* The wheat!"

"Leave it to me"

I went straight to the group of beastfolks that had gathered to the western side of the village.

I leave the village and run.

About 50 cat and fox beastfolks are pulling a number of carriages while they are fleeing.

It looked like that was the unit that was assigned to carry the stolen wheat away.

There were even women and children when I got closer.

They started to scream because I chased them with an enormous speed.

"He's coming!" "What shall we do, mother?" "Help us!"

A demon with the head of a wolf shouts loudly.

"What are you doing! Hurry and push the carriages! The food is more important than your lives!"

At that time, a beastfolk mother who was pushing a carriage spoke to her child.

"E-Even if it's just you, escape!"

"Y-Yes"

The about ten year old cat girl was running towards the mountains in the north. She moved her thin legs and desperately ran. Her cat tail was swinging.

"Hey, you! Don't run away, it's only one human!!!"

The wolf demon got on his four legs and chased after her while raising a cloud of sand. He's so fast that his outline blurs.

The girl's face became stiff from fear when she looked back.

"Nyooo...!"

"You guys also watch! This happens when you run away!"

He opens his mouth wide and shows his fangs.

The girl stumbled and fell to the ground.

I won't make it in time after all.

"Damn"

I flicked my tongue and took a stone from my pocket.

I aim while I'm running.

pashiiin!

I release the stone together with a shockwave from my fingertips that exceeded the speed of sound.

The stone gets red from the friction and flies straight.

It hits the wolf demon's side, runs through him and flies far into the distance.

It reached the forest at the foot of the mountain, where white smoke rose from the explosion.

zudoo... on, a heavy tremor could be heard a little later.

The beastfolks stopped moving.

They seemed to have grasped that I was responsible for the bombardment and understood that they would be unable to escape.

The wolf demon was dead as his eyes had turned white.

The girl was sitting down on her bottom.

I ignore the group and rush to the girl.

"Have you been injured?"

"A... a...!"

She was holding her pointy ears and was shivering.

--Well, of course she's frightened.

Her eardrums didn't seem to have torn thanks to her covering her ears.

I applied my hand since her knee was grazed.

"--'Recovery'"

The girl's injury got cured in a flash.

"Eh... eh?"

I pick the girl up who had sunk to the ground with one hand and head to the group of beastfolks.

They were mostly cat and fox beastfolks.

Even though I say beastfolks, some of them are completely covered in fur while others only have the characteristic ears and tails.

The beastfolks were sitting in Seiza on the ground. They had put their hands under their ankles.

It seemed to be a posture of submission or surrender since they couldn't make sudden movements.

Everyone had fear and anxiety in their faces and their ears and tails had drooped.

The boys and girls had cuddled up to their fathers and mothers and cried.

A fox man with two bushy tails steps forward when I approached.

He took the same submissive posture as everyone else and lowered his head.

"We have a request in exchange for our lives."

"What is it?"

"We'll return all the stolen grains and all men will offer their lives. But, please just spare the women and children."

I looked over the frightened beastfolks while I spoke.

"I don't think that this is up for discussion."

"Th-This is...!"

The adults were trembling and the children were crying out loud from fear.

I returned the girl to her mother and inquired the beastfolks.

"Let her quiet down. I am Hero Keika. Who are you?"

Unrest spread from the word "Hero".

The fox man lowers his head.

"My name is Mahal. I'm the leader of the Foxfolk tribe."

"Mahal, this looks like a rather large operation, why did you attack?"

"The truth is... there is no food at the beastfolk district that is controlled by the Demon Lord's army."

"Heh, was it a bad harvest?"

"No, our harvest was good. But it seems that the Demon Lord's army is understaffed and everything was robbed by strong demons."

"I see. So?"

"The beastfolk district governor Gurumon - although being a pig demon - took command of his subordinates and us beastfolks and lead the attack to compensate for it.

I looked around and spoke.

"There are only catfolks and foxfolks."

"Yes. We are few among the beastfolks, but the most was stolen from the fields of the catfolks and foxfolks."

"And you say that you were put to work."

"We were against the attack. But we were threatened to be killed should we flee... It's true that we took part in it though. We are prepared to die, but please help the women and children, Hero-sama."

There are 33 catfolks, 18 foxfolks... and one demon.

--Hmm?

"It seems that not all of you are beastfolks, right?"

""Eh?""

The beastfolks' gazes gathered in the back.

A demon resembling a hedgehog was trying to hide behind the beastfolks. He was weak when looking at his status. His skills like damage reflection and needle defense were unpleasant though.

--Well, I could kill him with a single swing of my Tachi.

The hedgehog was screaming with *eek*.

"I-I didn't do anything bad!"

"Mahal, who's that?"

"That's Gurumon's close aide Herge. He sweet-talked Gurumon to get all kinds of favors. He monitored us and passed it along."

The needles on his whole body were standing and bubbles came from his mouth.

"Th-That's wrong. I only did it because I was ordered to... Hero-sama, please believe me!"

"Everyone, give us a moment."

I carried my Tachi on my shoulder and pushed my way through the beastfolks.

Maybe because his legs gave in, he made a step back while he fell on his backside.

"You'll regret it if you kill me!"

"Is there anyone who'd miss him here?"

Nobody answered when I asked this. Rather, many people were glaring at him.

I go to his side and look down at him.

"It doesn't look like anyone will come for your aid. You can fight and die or run away and die, you have the free choice."

"Th-This is... I-I'm entrusted with an important task... *a*"

Herge covered his mouth in haste. I seemed that a secret had slipped out.

But it's too late. I didn't plan to let it pass by.

"Oh, tell me about it."

I stood with my Tachi up high while I spoke.

However, Herge's trembling suddenly settled.

His little eyes are gleaming with determination."

"I'm sorry... I, can't tell."

"Why?"

"I can't, betray my friend... So that's how far I go, huh. You can kill me."

"That's a fine spirit. Do you have anything left to say?"

Herge spoke with his eyes closed. Tears were spilling.

"In the end... I didn't find out Gerdolf's whereabouts. I'm sorry."

Did he get close to the small fry demons in order to look for the whereabouts of the guys of the Four Heavenly Kings?

Then it hit me.

"Are you an acquaintance of Leo?"

Herge's round eyes went wide open.

"Y-You know Leo!?"

"He's a companion."

"I-Is that so...! I, really didn't want to do this, it's the truth! But, I have to be recognized by even higher leaders to find out Gerdolf's whereabouts..."

--So he was spying?

I sheathed my Tachi.

"Then I'll grant you some extra time. But don't get lost yourself and don't become one of them."

"Eh? Yes, I get it. Thank you, Hero-sama!"

I looked at the beastfolks.

"Pretend you didn't hear this. You'll put yourself in danger."

"U-Understood."

Mahal was surprised but answered firmly.

--Well then, what to do?

We separated from the beastfolks and I inquired Herge.

"Doesn't the Demon Lord's army have enough food?"

"No, while there is enough, it's somewhere else. The arriving goods have halved after Evil Squid, who was in charge of the logistics, had died."

He might have used the navy for transportation since he controlled the ocean and the rivers.

While most demons are only thinking about immediate profits, there still seem to be some guys who are level-headed enough to properly think of logistics.

"I see. And now Gerdolf has to do all of this and that's why he's always moving about, huh."

"There aren't many strong demons who are good at management as well. Being only smart isn't enough. Demons will only listen to the strong after all."

They seem to be on the way to self-destruction.

That might change when the Demon Lord wakes up though.

"Is the situation at the beastfolk district bad?"

"They might not make it through this year's winter."

"...Conversely, it might be a chance."

"Eh?"

"Don't worry about it. Thanks for the info. What are you going to do now?"

"Of course, I'll head back!"

"You might get the attention of the higher ups, if you say that were defeated by the hero who defeated the guys of the Four Heavenly Kings and lives in the north of the Daphnes Kingdom."

Herge starts to walk.

"Yes, thank you. See you again, Hero Keika-sama. I'll report to Leo."

"Please do so."

Herge's needle body was making rustling sounds as he headed north at a quick pace.

I returned to the beastfolks.

"Now then. How to deal with you?"

"Yes. We'll accept any punishment."

"Even if I'd overlook this and let you return home, it seems that there wouldn't be any

food to live off. You'll work at my village. In exchange I'll provide you with food."

"I-Is that true!?"

The beastfolks are raising their voices in delight.

"That's more than we could have hoped for" "We're saved!" "Thank you very much!"

"So, the other beastfolks who ran away should still be around, right. Can you call for them to gather here?"

--Some of the fled beastfolks are also still carrying wheat.

"Understood. Then, excuse me-- Please block your ears since it'll be loud."

Mahal inhales and shouts loudly "*keeeeen!*". The shout has a force that penetrates the sky behind it.

The beastfolks gathered one after another.

Some came from the forest, some had taken shelter in the village and some had even dug themselves into the ground.

There were three foxfolks, four catfolks and one cowfolk.

They put the wheat onto the carriages. I used magic to heal the injured beastfolks.

"Well then, let's return the wheat to the village!"

"Hero-sama, won't the humans be anxious when we're not tied up?"

"You can't pull the carriages if you're tied up, right? I'll take care of it should something happen."

"Understood. We'll work as hard as if our lives are depending on it-- Have you heard that, everyone?"

""""Yes!""""

The beastfolks answered in unison.

I accompanied the beastfolks back to the village.

Chapter 86

It's one thing after another

I escorted the beastfolks back to Roni Village.

The villagers had gathered at the church.

I'm greeted by an elderly man in a priest's attire. He's the mayor.

"Hero-sama, thank you very much for rescuing the village."

"Are the villagers okay?"

"It ended with only a few casualties. There are two adventurers and two villagers. Lots of people were injured but got away with their lives. Some of them are still unconscious though."

"Ah, I see. Where are they? I should be able to heal them."

"Eh, is that true, Hero-sama? They are lying on the benches inside the church."

"Alright."

I quickly entered the church.

Since most people only have some shallow injuries, I'm chanting while i'm walking past the benches. "'Recovery'."

"Ooh!" "The pain is...!" "Is this for real?" "Hero-sama!? Amazing!" "Thanks!"

Voices of amazement and praise resounded in the church.

The people who were lying on the benches in front of the altar were certainly about to die.

There are a bloodstained young man with a deathly pale face and a boy whose neck and spine are broken. A priest was stabbed through his chest. A middle-aged man is suffering while his guts are spilling out.

"Although I talked big, this might be tough even for me --'Recovery'!"

I treat them while I touch them.

The young man was quickly cured. The boy was healed after reconnecting his bones and nerves. Because his heart was still beating, the priest was healed after fixing his lung.

The middle-aged man was in the worst condition. Before I could heal him, I had to put his intestines back to where they belonged and close his stomach. It ended with an additional chant of 'Recovery' to prevent a peritonitis.

Although it took some time and their pulses and breathing were shallow, they were alive.

"Very well, --They shouldn't move for a week, but their lives should be saved."

"Eh!? That hero-sama did... wasn't that person over there already dead?..."

"Ah, did you think that? I'm certain that he was still breathing..."

"Did you really save them!? --No way! How? Although my prayers didn't reach..."

"Well, I'm a hero after all."

A woman who was near the boy expressed her gratitude with "Thank you so much!" while spilling tears.

The other villagers were also amazed.

"Amazing!" "I can't believe it!" "That's a hero for you!" "Is that really the power of a hero...?"

I really might have overdone it, but I don't care because it saved some lives.

I left the church after seeing that everyone was healthy.

The beastfolks stood stiff.

I speak to the mayor.

"That's been taken care of. It seems that the beastfolks want to return the grains. They were threatened into subordination by the demons."

The mayor's face gets cloudy.

"Is... that so."

"I understand your feelings of disbelief. There might be people who won't be able to forgive them. But in my name of Hero Keika, I want you to forgive them. In exchange,

they pay by fixing the damage to the village."

"That's... , a grateful offer, but... right now, we're in the middle of discussing whether to abandon the village..."

"Abandon the village?"

"We don't have the expenses to request the restoration of the barrier around the fields. It was steadily created over decades, but... it's already..."

Probably because the mayor couldn't bear it, he covered his eyes. "*Sniff*", he sniffled his nose.

"It is done for, if a rural village can't cultivate its fields, huh."

"Yes... *aah*, to think that it became deserted when I was responsible for it..."

The mayor's eyes get red as he cries.

The beastfolks cast their eyes down in grief.

"Well, if it's just the barrier, I can restore it, so don't worry about that. Of course, I'd like a bag of grains... of soba in exchange. By the way, I extended the barrier around my village by five times."

The mayor raises his head.

"I-Is that true, Hero-sama!? Thank you very much! Then we can rebuild the village!"

"Then we should probably begin at once. You beastfolks will carry the debris out of the village!"

""""Yes""""

Then.

Suddenly, a boy jumped out to the front. He points at the beastfolks and shouts.

"These guys! They were the ones who broke the barrier! I saw it!"

"What!?" "For real!?"

"A beastfolk that looked like a pig broke it!"

The adults are calming down.

I spoke.

"That wasn't a beastfolk but a demon. I know it's confusing, but there are beastfolks and beast demons. They're different."

"But, but, even so!"

I glared at the boy who was still speaking with the coercion of a god.

"Be quiet. You'll go to jail if you doubt my - the hero's - words. Do you get it?"

"*Eek*"

The boy fell on his backside and was shivering.

Then I glare at the adults.

"You as well. The beastfolks were forced into submission and really didn't want to do this. Do you get this?"

"Ye-Yes...!"

The men were shivering.

The hooves of horses could be heard.

When I looked there, Bailey, some villagers and swordsmen entered the village while riding on five horses.

Minya was running next to them in her Miko dress. Her ears were standing happily.

"Keika-oniichan!"

"Thanks for coming, Minya, Bailey and everyone else. We were just about to clean up the village, so please help together with the beastfolks."

"Yup"

They nodded and headed to the beastfolks.

I look at the mayor.

"Then shall we go restoring the barrier?"

"Yes. This way please."

I was guided by the mayor and put up the barrier.

Some remaining Lizardmen and Fire Lizards were still lurking in the pond, but Minya took care of them when she found them. She gutted them afterwards and turned them into raw materials.

After that she went on to silently gut the dead demons.

It was decided that half the materials were left to the village while the other half would be brought back by Minya.

Meanwhile I surrounded the village with a large barrier and the fields with several barriers.

I returned to the village's entrance after several hours.

Minya, Bailey and the beastfolks were standing in a row.

The mayor speaks while handing over a bag of grain. It's heavy. It seems to be about 25 or 30 kg.

"Hero-sama, thank you very much for rescuing the village. Please take this soba as an expression of our gratitude... I hope that you're really fine with it since it's not wheat."

"Soba is fine. It can be harvested after 75 days after all. I plan to sow it immediately."

"Immediately!? You won't make it in time before the first snow!"

"Well, it'll work out one way or another. Then, about the barrier..."

"Yes, what is it?"

"I set it up to be quite strict. It forbids demons, monsters and also people with ill-will towards the village to enter... And starting tomorrow also beastfolks won't be able to pass. Are you fine with that?"

"Yes... I'm sorry for the beastfolks, but I hope for their understanding after what had happened."

Mahal, the leader of the foxfolks, who was waiting behind, lowered his head.

"It's only natural. We're really sorry."

The other beastfolks lowered their heads as well.

"Sorry" "We're sorry" "Please forgive us"

"Well, it can't be helped that it will take a long time for them to be forgiven... Next, it might be need to be discussed first, but..."

"What might it be?"

"Would you like to have a device that immediately tells you whether a strong demon, that can't be stopped by the barrier is around?"

-- Like the pig Gurumon who lead the invasion.

I don't know how strong the previous barrier was, but it should have been like non-existent to a higher demon.

"Is there something like that!? Yes, by all means!"

"Very well. I'll let it deliver to you once it's finished-- Now then, shall we go home everyone?"

"Yup"

Minya nods as she walked to my side. The beastfolks are following behind.

The villagers are waving their hands.

"Thank you, Hero-sama" I'm grateful that you saved my husband" "You're truly a hero!"

We cross the hill and advance to Keika Village to the southeast.

I shared a Boo Horse with Minya.

Bailey, who also rides a Boo Horse, approaches.

"Keika-sama, will the beastfolks live at the village?"

"That's right"

"Won't the villagers be afraid?"

"They might be--"

"Maybe you should make them into slaves, or at least into fake slaves..."

Hmm, I was in thoughts.

Mahal approaches from behind.

"I overheard your conversation. While we don't plan to cause any trouble, we'll become slaves if it reduces the anxiety."

"Yeah. But then the prejudice won't ever disappear. I'd like you to coexist if possible."

Mahal's and Bailey's eyes went wide.

"Humans coexist with beastfolks!?"

"Aren't you already living together? -- Minya?"

"Yeah."

She nodded expressionlessly. Her black hair flows silkily in the wind.

Bailey scratches his head.

"I see, I'm sorry. You are around after all, Minya-san."

"Keika-oniichan. I know of a good way."

"What is it?"

"Beastfolks are obeying the strongest one of them. So there won't be a problem if I win against them."

"No no,... I'm the strongest among the beastfolks here and I won't lose to any children."

"Keika-oniichan made me strong. I won't lose to anyone."

"You wouldn't be able to win against Keika-sama even if he did a handstand..."

Minya glares at Mahal.

"Doubting my strength is a disrespect against Onii-chan."

"No, it's the truth though..."

Mahal drooped his ears and asked of my opinion.

I giggled.

"Isn't this fine? Just fight it out when all the villagers have gathered. You can go all out."

"When you say that we can go all out, Keika-sama... but wouldn't now be fine as well?"

"No, you'll fight on the day of the festival when the people have gathered."

--Moreover, some betting will liven things up even further.

That'll become a nice performance.

Minya murmured with a prickly attitude, not knowing my inner thoughts.

"I'll win... for sure!"

--Then.

The shock of a heavy impact ran through my head.

"Keika! Something big has arrived!"

Lapisia telepathically contacted me.

--*Ouch*, something big, you say?

Might the main body of the army have acted separately after all?

I quickly looked at the village with "Clairvoyance".

There certainly was something big.

A huge body like a green jewel was at the western side of the village at the new pond.

--Isn't that the dragon from Green Mountain!?

"Who?"

--No no. You've met before. She's the mother of the eggs.

"I can't tell the faces of dragons apart."

--Well, I can't really argue against that. I also couldn't tell even if lined up... For now I'll quickly head back to the village, so please tell the villagers to be at ease.

"Understood!"

I jumped off the horse.

"I've got business at the village. I'll go ahead. Please take your time to return."

"Understood."

Minya nodded expressionlessly.

Mahal and Bailey also nodded.

"Yes, Keika-sama. We'll come later."

"Shouldn't you ride the horse?"

"I'm faster when I run-- I'm a hero after all."

Bailey tilted his head but I had already started to run.

--At any rate, just what the hell had happened that she came to the village by herself.

I hope there isn't anything wrong.

I hurried to Keika Village with a bad feeling. I chanted "Gale Legs" as soon as I was out of everyone's sight.

Chapter 87

Dragon Consultation

I ran at full speed and arrived at Keika Village in about ten minutes.

The dragon was sitting near the rectangular pond and was drinking water.

--Or rather, wasn't the surrounding barrier broken? I guess I'll have to restore it again.

When thinking about it, maybe I should make it strong enough that even dragons wouldn't be able to pass.

But then there's a possibility that people won't be able to cross it as well.

"So. What the hell did you come here for?"

"Oh. It's been a while, Keika. Something troublesome came up."

"The treaty of non-aggression with the humans might crumble if you won't stay at the mountain."

"I know already, but it couldn't be helped!"

"Heh. What happened?"

The dragon frowned while looking serious.

"The truth is... I can't complete the dungeon."

"You came here just to consult with me about your hobby!?"

I was taken aback while I spoke, but the conversation turned back serious immediately.

"What's wrong with that? You're the one who captured the dungeon I had made at great pains!"

"I should be the one who's angry... So, what's the problem?"

"I can't get my hands on any eye-catching big monsters."

"Hm? Haven't you given up on big monsters?"

"Dungeons are all about floors after all. And floors need floor-bosses! There's no way to get a high rank in the contest without any rare and strong monsters."

"Didn't you have a Crystal Boa, a Sand Whale, a Dragon Zombie and a Magic Golem at that time?"

"And you have eliminated them all..."

She looked at me with with a reproachful look in her eyes.

--That's your own fault.

"Can't you just paint your body and appear on the fifth, tenth and fifteenth floor?"

"As if I could do such low budget play! That would be way too embarrassing."

"I don't have any ideas. And I don't care about your contest. The world is in a crisis, you know?"

The dragon's eyes went wide.

"In that case, I think there is a relation."

"What?"

"You want to kill the Demon Lord but don't have the holy sword, right?"

"I'm surprised you know. I already have my sights set on the raw materials and the creating process. Than all I need are the gems from Edelstein."

"I see. Do you already have the 'Silver Iron', which doesn't exist in this world?"

"Silver Iron?"

"You have to mix it with the gems and the pulverized Holy Dragon Fang to forge the Heaven Calling Holy Sword, right?"

"Eh? Lilille didn't tell anything about that..."

The corners of the dragon's mouth distorted as if she had eaten something bad.

"I don't want to talk bad about that goddess, but... she's a little unmindful I guess..."

"Ah, as I thought. Does everyone think so?"

"Yeah. But please don't tell her that I've said that."

"I certainly did have some doubts that only some gems and bones would be sufficient

to make the sword. --So, from the flow of the talk I guess that the Silver Iron is a prize in the contest?"

"Exactly. You want the Silver Iron and I want to win because of the prestige and because I'll then get five additional floors."

"Then you can make 20 floors?"

"Yeah. I want them by all means for the eggs. At present I put the rooms for the eggs on two floors. I don't have to worry about them being stolen if the floors aren't used."

"I see, that makes sense. I've actually found another egg since then. Lilille is holding onto it."

"I that so. I'm glad. I already can't bear it anymore to be separated from my eggs. I'll put my faith in the hands of the gods."

"You're thinking of a Deus Ex Machina?"

"What's that?"

"Well, it basically means that everything is resolved by the direct intervention of the gods. Originally it was a technique used in theater where a god appeared for example by hanging on a mechanical system and then told the end of the story."

"That's interesting. A god hanging on a mechanical system..."

"*Hmmm*", the dragon bent her long neck while being in thoughts.

The wind blew, made my black hair sway and crossed the fields.

I speak.

"I'd like to help since I want the Silver Iron, but you'd first have to tell me more about the dungeon. Otherwise there won't come any ideas to mind."

"That's certainly true. As a first outline, I'll make two dungeons with fifteen floors each. They are separated into beginner and advanced level."

"We broke through the advanced level. Is the first floor something like a community area? There were neither traps nor treasures."

"Stray monsters were permanently entering the dungeon, so I already gave up that floor. I plan to leave it as is."

I remember the first floor. It was a normal dungeon. The passage was a maze and there were lots of empty rooms.

"You're thinking about it the wrong way."

"Why!?"

"That's too normal. There are no dreams behind it."

"Dreams...? But no matter what I put there, it's immediately taken, and when putting traps there..."

"It's fine even if there aren't any traps or treasures. Instead, you should make the interior like a royal tomb. Make a large room in the center and small, empty rooms around it. In the center could be a sarcophagus and at the wall a huge stone statue..."

"Oh!"

"That way, even if there are no treasures on the first level, it'll look like there are good items to get. Adventurers will then challenge it one after another."

"I-I see... first you'll have to create the mood, huh."

"That's right. Looking like there are lots of things to steal is also a trap. It's a psychological trap. And the small rooms are made for wild monsters to live in."

The dragon nods with sparkling eyes.

"That small change can be done with few DP as well. Let's try this!"

"What's DP?"

"Ah, that's the abbreviation for Dungeon Points. You receive them for repelled intruders or when the dungeon hasn't been conquered for some time and so on. They are consumed by traps, treasure chests, monsters and the like."

"I see. How many do you have?"

"At the moment about 45000 DP. A door costs 100 DP and a maze 1000 DP, so it quickly dwindles when tampering with all floors."

"What does it cost to summon a Goblin?"

"That are 10 DP. One DP equals one gold coin. But creatures will die if they don't create an ecosystem."

"I see--, speaking of which, on the second floor was the snake, rats and trees. On the third floor were ants and caterpillars."

"The rat population exploded after the snake was dead on the second floor. It was really bad. Even middle class snakes were devoured when put there..."

I ended up laughing without feeling bad for the dragon.

"*Ahaha*, so what became of it?"

"They began to devour each other, and at the end, the remaining one evolved into a golden King Rat."

"Isn't that a good thing? But to think that they are also evolving... It might be interesting to aim for that."

"Sure. But there isn't much time left. I completely neglected it because the dungeon was already complete, but the contest is in one month."

"That's really soon. Then, why don't you place the King Rat on the 15th floor and make it into a complex maze."

"That's troublesome. I made the 14th and 15th floor large enough for me to enter and put the eggs into hidden rooms there. Also, I don't want to place monsters on the same floors as the eggs."

"That's no good."

"Right? That's why I'd place the King Rat on the 13th floor at most..."

"No, that's not it. I meant that it's no good to hide the eggs in hidden rooms."

"Why? Won't they be taken if they're not hidden?"

"That's pretty much like saying that they are valuable if they are hidden. I for example would find them even if I had to break the walls down. Then I'd think that they are valuable and take them with me."

"*Gulp*... then, tell me what I should do!"

The dragon shouted with a sobbing face. It was the face of a mother this time.

I giggled.

"They'll only be snatched away if they are hidden. You should make them into key items instead."

"What do you mean?"

The dragon tilted her long neck.

"Let's see. How about locking the room with the stairs and put an egg on a pedestal? The door will open when the egg is picked up and the challengers can advance. And the walls and floor are covered with so many spear traps, that the egg has to be carried with both hands. You can just write it on a signboard somewhere."

"Hmm?"

"Then, the door to the room with the stairs to the next floor will open when the egg is placed on a pedestal in front of the last room. The door will close in an instant should the egg be removed. The adventurers have to leave the egg behind to go through the door. To avoid the traps and thinking that it is the key item that opens the door, they'll leave the floor without thinking about taking the egg."

"I see"

"Also, having to carry the egg with both hands has another point to it. No matter whether it's carried by a swordsman or a priest, one member of the party won't be able to participate in battle. The war potential is greatly diminished. Additionally, all traps will be triggered simultaneously when the egg is let go off and everyone will be skewered and die."

"*Ooooooh*! You're... a devil! So I'll be able to not only protect the egg but also repel the challengers! How wonderful!"

The green eyes of the dragon were sparkling while she smiled.

--Well. I am glad that she's happy with it up to this point.

"But isn't this all advanced level?"

"Just like with you at that time, the worst case could always occur. I'd like to be

prepared for anything."

"You certainly should be thoroughly with respect to the eggs. There's also another option: To make the eggs a part of collectibles."

"Hm? What do you mean?"

"You'll scatter a triangular pyramid, a ball and a cube in the dungeon and they'll have to be placed in front of the final door in the correct order. Hints to the correct order will be written on signboards around the dungeon."

"I see. I also won't have to worry about it being taken away if it's part of collectibles, huh."

"And if the order is wrong, you could move the egg to a save place and then drop acid or cause explosions."

"That's dreadful! I could make the holes soft by using felt. --I see, they'll only be snatched away if they are hidden. And conversely, they won't be regarded as valuable when they're boldly in the open."

"Of course you'll have to apply some hardening magic to the eggs. Can you do that?"

"There's no problem. Even a holy sword wouldn't be able to scratch them. They can't be opened before they are born."

The dragon answered with a serious look on her face.

I further told her another idea.

"Next, there's also the option to hide something in between many of the same item."

"I thought about that as well, but won't that have the opposite effect? Isn't that like telling that there is something of value?"

"That's why that'll also be a key item. For example you can make it so that many similar items are inside a large room and the door will only open if the real egg is placed in the arms of a goddess's statue."

"I see"

"Moreover, if a fake egg is placed there, you could drop acid and make it explode."

"Yo-You're a devil, Keika. How can you think about that again and again..."

"I learned it after I've gone through it once. The important thing is to attack the psyche."

"Attack the psyche... can you give an example?"

"Let's see. When speaking of your dungeon, there was the huge room with the boat inside on the floor with the waterways, right?"

"Yes. I placed it there because I thought it might definitely be surprising."

The dragon looked a little proud while she said that.

However, I completely crush her confidence.

"It certainly was surprising, but that's all. That's no good. There should be a waterfall that lets everyone die who boarded the boat. The real exit should then be under a treasure chest, which has to be moved aside."

"So I should make the boat itself a trap?"

"Anybody would think that the boat is the correct way to clear the floor if it's placed there. And you had traps on the stepping stones, but you should remove them. You should invite the challengers instead."

"Th-That's dreadful... I'm glad that you're not a dungeon master!"

I frowned with my arms crossed.

"The Demon Lord is even more dreadful... I still remember how I had to kill and dissect my own companion to clear it. I still have a heavy trauma from it even now."

The feeling of killing my important Celica with my own hands.

The more I cherish her, the more I recall that bad sensation.

That's really the most evil. I'll never be able to forgive Vanus just for this alone.

"The Demon Lord's dungeon? Did you capture the castle in the north?"

"No, I mean the Tower of Trials. Haven't I told you? There are only five levels, but they are--"

The dragon's face distorted from disgust while I explained it to her.

"To think that there is something like that... that dungeon is... I feel sick just by hearing

about it."

"Yeah, that's true. Vanus certainly has the right personality to be the Demon Lord."

"Vanus!? Does that mean that the god Vanus is the Demon Lord!?"

"Hmm, didn't you know?"

The dragon cast her serious looking eyes downward.

"Not really. It's not like I'm constantly watching the gods' movements. But this is troublesome..."

"What's wrong?"

"This time, a dungeon made by Vanus is participating as well."

"Eh? He shouldn't be able to move currently..."

"Well, representatives of the Vanus church are participating. It's probably their first time."

"Heh... that sounds tough. But, why suddenly... hmm, might they participate to prevent the holy sword from being created?"

--Just how far do they intend to get in the way? I'll have to weaken them somehow.

The dragon stretched her neck and spoke.

"At any rate, thank you for the good ideas. As expected of the man who became a hero. I'll implement the ideas as quickly as possible."

"Do your best."

"Well then, I'll come again."

"Coming again, huh... can't you take the shape of a human? That appearance is quite problematic..."

The dragon frowned disagreeably.

"Why should I, the mightiest dragon, mimic a human?"

"Then, at least make yourself smaller. I'll be troubled if the barrier is broken again."

"I'm sorry about that. I'll make myself smaller when I visit the next time."

"Yeah. Well then--"

--Then. People came running from the village.

The one in front has green hair and large breasts, that are bouncing up and down. The girl behind her is wearing a white dress and has blue twin tails.

They were Fioria the elf and Lapisia.

"Keika-sama, Keika-sama! It's terrible!"

"What's wrong, Fioria?"

"I was just contacted by my elf companions through the fairies-- It seems that World Tree-sama is dying!"

"What did you say!?"

-- Speaking of which, Lilille had said that the World Tree was weak.

"Somehow, please! Please save World Tree-sama!"

"Alright!"

I looked at the dragon.

"It's an emergency. Please take us to the World Tree."

"It can't be helped. Get on."

The dragon bent her neck for us to easily get on.

"Lapisia, you'll come with me!"

"Yup!"

The dragon spread her wings once I and Lapisia were on her back.

"Keika, hold on tight!"

"It's alright. Fly as fast as possible!"

"You don't have to tell me!"

"*Hmph*", the dragon smiled and took off.

Fioria shouted from below while she held her hair down.

"Somehow, somehow, please--!"

Leaving her earnest wish behind us, the dragon we had mounted flew westward.

Chapter 88

A matter of life and death for the elves (Lapisia levels up)

I and Lapisia were flying on the back of the dragon.

We're heading towards the setting sun in the west.

I was told that the World Tree would be dying.

--Although it received the power of three gods, that wasn't enough... -- What the hell?

No matter how much I thought about it, I couldn't understand it.

Then, Lapisia, who was sitting in front of me, started to flash.

The bewildered dragon turned her long neck around and spoke.

"What is this!? Is she about to explode!?"

"No, her next level-up condition is 'Know the sky'".

"The sky! The wind! This feels good!"

Lapisia looked as if she felt good and shouted while she was flashing.

"*Heh*", I was pondering.

"That's right... what do you think when looking at the clouds?"

"They look fun!"

"Do you see that tall cloud over there? That's called a cumulonimbus cloud. It's currently raining below it."

"Rain... feels good!"

"Yeah, the rain wets the earth. No matter how fertile the ground is, it will dry out without any rain."

"Yup...!"

"The warm wind blows into the direction where it's cold and the cold wind blows into

the direction where it's warm."

"Hm?"

"Clouds are born and it rains when the cold air of the continent and the warm air of the ocean collide-- The wind circulates around the earth and lets it rain everywhere."

"Then, is the sky a friend of the earth?"

"That's right. Also, the sky is there because of the mass of the earth. The earth is pulling the air to itself."

"It's gravity!"

"Ah, you know. As expected of a Mother Earth God. The earth would die without the sky that gives birth to the clouds. But without the earth, the sky couldn't exist. They are living hand-in-hand."

"The sky... is important! I became to love it more and more! -- I love it!"

Her twin tails fluttered and she made a broad smile.

ka!

At that moment, Lapisia's slender body shone brightly.

In addition, the "Proof of Hero" flashed as well.

"Member (Lapisia) has risen a level"

"Acquired a new skill"

[Status]

Name: Lapisia

Gender: Female

Age: 257

Race: Half-God

Job: Earth Mother God Lv 5 (Know life)

Class: Healer, God Art User

Attributes: "Fertility" "Radiant Soil" "Sacred Ground"

Assignment: Hero Keika Party

[Parameters]

Muscle strength: 110K (20K) (+0) max ∞

Agility: 60K (10K) (+0) max ∞
Magic strength: 180K (20K) (+0) max ∞
Wisdom: 80K (10K) (+0) max ∞
Luck: 999 (0) (+0) max ∞
Believers: 0

Vitality: 850K
Mental strength: 1.3 million

Attack strength: 110K
Defense strength: 120K
Magical strength: 180K
Magical Defense: 80K

[Equipment]

Weapons: None

Protective Gear: [Silver Dress] A dress filled with motherly love Defense x 1.5 [Nullify All Abnormal States] [Recovery with Elapsed Time]

Accessories: Ring

[Earth Mother God Skills]

Earth Energy Collection: Gathers the energy of the earth in yourself or another god. Attack strength x Lv value.

Earth crust turn: Reforms the earth by pulling the surface and putting it back.

Terraforming: Can transform naturally occurring elements like soil, sand, rocks and minerals into other known naturally occurring elements.

Gravitational Pull: Lets you draw satellites and planets to you and unite them like a sun.

I only noticed it now, but Celica and Minya had also risen a level during the previous battle.

"But, you learned something dangerous again... will the moon drop if you used this? It might be possible to use it on meteorites and comets, but-- Listen well, Lapisia. Don't use the skill you've just learned under any circumstances, okay? "

"Understood. I'll do whatever you say, Keika!

Lapisia looked back at me and smiled.

Then she leaned against me.

I placed my chin on her head while I gently embraced her from behind.

"That's just right, huh"

"Meh... this is..."

She inflated her faintly blushing cheeks in dissatisfaction.

It's kinda cute.

Then the dragon turned around.

"You said that she learned something dangerous, will this really be okay?"

"There's no problem as long as she doesn't use it. It's called 'Gravitational Pull' and seems to draw satellites and planets to her."

"How nostalgic... The god used it to increase the volume of this star at the time of creation."

"Is that so? Or rather, are you already living that long?"

"Of course. I was already alive before any other living beings. I was summoned by the gods and put to work. The words where 'We'll give you a world that you can freely control in exchange'. That's how I became a dungeon master."

"It certainly is like a freely controllable world. It's close to fraud though..."

"Well, it's fun to manage and I also gained some valuable experiences, so its alright."

"By the way, what kind of person is the Creation God?"

"I don't know because I've never met her in person-- Ah, there it is!"

The dragon was flying above the desert.

Below us was the endless sand and the giant stump. Only around the stump was soil. Green grass had begun to grow. I can also see the tents where the elves are living.

"Oh?"

The sand that surrounded the stump was glittering white.

We get off at the stump.

I grab the soil. It's covered with white crystals.

"Isn't this... salt?"

The dragon speaks.

"Can I go home?"

"Please wait! I want you to take us back later."

"*Hmph*. I guess I don't have a choice."

The dragon flew to the top of the stump and and curled up.

The elven chieftain Jagd approached.

"Ke-Keika-sama! Please, lend your power to World Tree-sama!"

"Hmm, it'll only grow weaker if we don't do anything about the salt. Why is the salt here? Is this the work of the demons?"

"I don't know, but suddenly the salt gushed out to the surface."

"So it wasn't sprinkled from the sky by demons?"

"No... it seems to be the result of evaporation. Salt might have mixed into the groundwater."

"In other words, the water might flow through an area with rock salt... well, we'll deal with it somehow. Lapisia?"

"Whaaat's up , Keika?"

"Can you change this salt into sand?"

"Hm~, I'll try."

Lapisia crouched down and put her hands on the ground. She moaned with "*uuu*" and her body shone yellow.

However, after Lapisia had moaned for a while, she swiftly stood up and shook her head.

"This salt... , it's different from earth."

"Eh? Isn't rock salt a part of the earth?"

Lapisia's Mother Earth God skill "Terraforming" can only be used with materials that are part of the earth.

Lapisia tilts her neck while frowning with her cute wrinkles.

"It's probably... the ocean, isn't it?"

"Isn't that quite far away from the desert? --*Aah!*"

I had a very bad feeling.

I remembered a certain someone who had summoned a part of the ocean with magic.

I also remember her making an over-sized water column.

--No way!

I invoke telepathy.

"Lilille. Are you listening?"

"What is it, Keika-san?"

"Where are you?"

"I'm currently in the former Edelstein territory."

"Is that so. Well, that's fine. The truth is, the World Tree is dying."

"It can't be!? Although I gave it some magic power again!"

It's dying from salt damage. --That's why I want to ask you something."

"Wh-What is is!?"

"...When you summoned a part of the ocean, that was water from the ocean, right?"

"Eh? Yes, that's right-- *a*"

"You also made that column of millions of tons of water to suffocate Barrier Muuk. Was that fresh water? Or was that water taken directly from the ocean?"

"...cean,..."

"Eh, what did you say? I couldn't hear you!"

"I made it with ocean water...! What should we do!? Is the World Tree done for!?"

"...I'll do whatever I can. --It's mostly the fault of the Demon Lord after all, so it can't be helped... but really, isn't it enough already?"

"*Uu*... I'm sorryyy!"

"You should put it back where it belongs from now on if you use that Ocean God skill."

"Yeeeshhh... Really, I'm sorryyy"

"Well, I'll do something about it. Don't worry."

I quickly cut the telepathic connection when she started to cry.

I sighed with a "*haaa*".

"There's no choice but to wash the salt out of the sand... Jagd, how do the World Tree's roots go? "

"I think that they reach until below the bedrock and spread to the edges of the desert."

"Then I guess I'll have to submerge it, huh. Can you please bring me a cup or a plate?"

"Yes, understood!"

Jagd hurried back to the tent village.

I walked around the stump and went into its shade.

I'll take the gourd from my waist.

Lapisia's eyes sparkled with curiosity.

"What are you doing, Keika?"

"I'll call clouds and make it rain. Please make a large pond with the width, length and depth of about 100 meters a little further away. And harden the bank so it won't leak. And take care not to injure the roots."

"Yes!"

Lapisia's twin tails are fluttering as she runs toward the east of the desert.

Jagd returned and gave me a plate.

"Everyone should evacuate to the stump since the tents will probably get submerged."

"Yes, Keika-sama"

Jagd rushed back.

After I had confirmed with "Clairvoyance" that the elves had evacuated, I placed the plate in the shadow and put some water inside.

Then I cast.

"Gentle breeze that obeys me, cold wind, warm wind, far and wide clouds, I call upon thee--'Rain Area'"

googoo, a rumbling sound can be heard from the sky. The wind is raging violently just like before a typhoon.

White clouds are appearing in the former cloud-less sky.

Cumulonimbus clouds were gathering as well as if they were gliding.

The sunlight was blocked and the surroundings became dim.

Lightning flashes inside the clouds.

Then, a raindrop hit my cheek.

And then there was a downpour like tipping over a bucket.

The surroundings of the World Tree begin to submerge.

Lapisia returns while she jumps up and down.

The white dress is drenched and clings to her, making her slender body shine through.

"Lapisia, please move the soil and sand and stir them.

"Yes."

She puts her hands on the muddy ground and moves it. It starts to eerily vibrate with *gogogo*.

--I hope that this'll wash the salt out...

The trees won't grow anymore should the World Tree die. The world would end.

Something like salt damage wouldn't have been an issue if the World Tree wouldn't

have been weakened since it's a god.

It seems that it was about to die because the salt damage gave the finishing blow after it had been consecutively tormented.

--Really now, just how much of a klutz is Lilille...

I chanted when I felt that the salt had been dissolved.

"--Oh filled water, oh gentle flow-- 'Surging Stream'"

Following my chant, the mud that surrounded the stump like a lake began to flow in a stream.

Of course the water that had penetrated the deep underground is sucked to the surface as well.

Then it poured into the huge pool that Lapisia had made.

I repeated the same procedure three times and then let the rain stop.

The World Tree's surroundings have considerably degraded and Lapisia piled up earth to cover the roots.

The clouds cleared up.

The wet ground will dry under the hot sun.

"Well, that should do it, probably..."

"Is it over?"

"Well done, Lapisia."

"*ehehe*... I worked hard."

I got slightly wet when I stroked her head.

For the time being we climbed the stump that was as wide as a plateau and went to look at the sprout that we had given power before.

Previously it was just a sprout but it had grown. It was now thick like the torso of a human and about the height of a human. Leaves have appeared.

Then I and Lapisia shared our power with it.

But even though it received the power from two gods, the reaction was weak.

I was curious and looked at it with "Truth Sight".

[Status]

Name: Mundis

Age: ?

Race: World Tree

Job: Illusion Tree

Attributes: "Holy Tree"

[Data] Former World Tree. Couldn't exist as a god due to piled up damage.

"...the world is done for..."

"Is it dead?"

Lapisia looked sad while she frowned.

"Let's ask the elves."

We returned with heavy steps.

The elves had put up tents on top of the stump. The dragon was curled up and was sleeping not far away from them.

Everyone looked gloomy.

Jagd went ahead and stepped forward.

"Thank you very much, Keika-sama... World Tree-sama has been saved from death."

"But, it's not a god anymore, right? Is there anything we can do? Can't it be resurrected somehow with something like seeds or by grafting?"

"We don't have any seeds. And even if grafting would work, it'll just be an ordinary big tree."

"Then, how about planting a new one?"

"The tree was planted by Creation God-sama... it would just be wishful thinking that it would revive as a god if planted."

The Creation God again? Well, myths are often getting out of hand before you know it.

"So that won't be good enough, huh. I guess there's no choice but to bring some seeds from some different world."

I should be able to find at least one if I could just visit some worlds.

But Jagd shook his head with a sad look.

"Only World Tree-sama can open paths that lead to different worlds. It seems it can stretch its branches to exterior worlds."

--Huh? Suddenly I had a premonition.

I sprinkle some water a slightly apart.

"O one who connects heavens and time, Heaven Bird Ship God. Comply to my calling and open the road to the beyond! -- 'Spirit World Gate'"

Nothing happened.

"O one who gives birth to and raises the oceans far and wide, Ocean God Lilille. In my name of Keika Hiko-no-Mikoto, comply to my calling and open the road to the beyond! -- 'Spirit World Gate'"

Nothing happened.

A chill ran down my spine.

--I can't return home anymore, huh...!

Then Lilille telepathically talked to me.

"Did you, do something weird just now? *sniff*"

"Well, a little. Are you crying again? The World Tree is saved... I washed the salt out with fresh water."

"Is that true? Thank you very much!! *uu... u*"

"But since it lost its divinity, I tried to open the path to my former world in your name."

"I don't know where your former world is, so I can't open it even if you'd asked me..."

"That's true as well... the one who knew it was the World Tree, huh."

"Ah, Mundis. We got along so well and it was such a cute child..."

I cut the telepathic connection again when her voice began to sob again.

I catch my breath.

"--hm, it can't be. A tree, that can open Spirit World Gates, summon people and has a will -- I know"

"Eh!?"

Jagd raised his voice in surprise.

The big divine-class tree that I first met when I came to this world.

I thought that I drifted to this world by chance. I thought that I had met Celica by chance. I thought that I had defeated Greyhades by chance.

I thought that it was a coincidence that there were almost no gods and that I could do whatever I wanted to do.

Might the World Tree have summoned me?

If thinking about it thoroughly, no matter how much of a fantasy-world this is, isn't it strange that a tree answers by swinging his branches when it's spoken to?

"By any chance, did the World Tree fall into the eastern direction when it was cut down?

"That's right. I'm surprised you know."

"Would the World Tree be able to create countless boundaries by making use of the trees in a forest?"

"Yes, it can make you lose your way or guide you. I can do various things."

I guess it spread seeds when it was cut down which then took root in the Daphnes Kingdom.

And when Leo's party entered the forest and they got scattered, might the World Tree have wanted to call for the elves when Tilt was in its area of effect?

However, Tilt had left the village at a young age and probably has hardly trained as an elf and wasn't able to notice the presence of the World Tree.

"So that decides it, huh. The World Tree isn't dead. It only switched places."

"Wh-Where is it!?"

"In exchange for telling you, can you listen to a request?"

"Of course, Hero-sama!"

"There's a large forest to the north of my village in the north of the Daphnes Kingdom. There once was a road that led further to the north, but it has disappeared. The World Tree might have used his power. Actually, the World Tree at this place might just be a diversion against the demons."

The World Tree can't move. It'll be done for if it is found. That's why it concealed itself within young trees.

--No way, might Greyhades have been looking for the real World Tree?

And then the World Tree felt the crisis and pulled me to itself when I was floating in hyperspace to defeat Greyhades?

Jagd braced himself and spoke.

"We should investigate it at once!"

"Hm, I guess that would be for the best. We'll head home now, so we could take two elves with us --Dragon, please get up."

"Ah, are we returning? --You can get on"

The dragon showed her mouth with its lined-up fangs as she yawned and crouched down to make it easy to get on.

I and Lapisia mounted the dragon and Jagd brought a male and a female elf along.

"These are the two strongest persons in our village. Please take them with you."

"Very well. --Dragon. It's for the sake of the World Tree, so can you let these elves get on with us?"

"At the end they'd get on even if I was against it, right? Well, get on."

"I'm really sorry, Dragon-sama" "We're grateful that we're permitted to ride on your back"

The elves waved their short linen clothing and sat down behind me.

"Well then, let's go."

The dragon spread her wings and flew high up to the sky.

We flew westward under the calm flapping of her wings.

Chapter 89

Relaxing village days

It was dusk by the time we returned to Keika village.

We dismounted to the north of the village, so the barrier wouldn't be broken, and I spoke to the elves.

"You've probably already seen it from above, but the large forest is about one day away when following this road. Tilt had said, that he got lost inside it, but he was probably guided since he's an elf."

"Understood, Keika-sama" "Thank you very much"

"Please let me know if something happens. Well, I think it should be alright though."

""Yes!""

The elves replied with tense looks on their faces.

And even though it was already dusk, they headed north.

The mission of protecting the World Tree was assigned to them.

I looked at the dragon.

"Thank you for making the round-trip."

"Don't worry about it... but, I've got one question..."

"What is it?"

"Since you're a god, can't you fly in the sky by yourself?"

I earnestly nodded.

"Of course I can fly. Even faster than you."

"Then why did you ride on me?"

She barked as if she was showing her fangs.

I scratched my head. My black hair swayed.

"Even though I can fly... the consumption of magic power is enormous and it's tough over a longer time. It depletes about 10000 in ten minutes."

"Heh."

"My spells simply aren't optimized for this world, so it can't be helped. I also can't get the permission of the Wind God since he's sealed. And without making use of the jet streams I have to fly with the gentle breeze. I have to use what's available."

"I see, so it's something like that"

"That's why it really helped that you let me ride you. --Well then, please work hard on your dungeon."

"Yeah. I'll come again before long."

The dragon took off and flew home.

I sigh.

"That tired me off. I'll take a bath right when I'm back-- ah, it's not done yet!"

"Keika, are you tired?"

"I ran, fought, flew, I had to make rain, it was one surprise after another. I'm mentally tired."

"Then, shall I carry you?"

"Please stop that, that would mentally tire me even more."

"Understood."

Lapisia's young face looked like she was full of energy.

"You look like you're full of energy."

"Yup~! I had you all to myself! I'm happy."

She shyly "*ehehe*" -ed and her cheeks blushed when she took my hand. It's a small and soft hand.

My mood lightened up from the gentle warmth.

"Ah, that's right. I wouldn't even have been able to do half of it if it weren't for you,

Lapisia. Thank you."

"Yup!"

We held hands while we returned to the residence.

Probably because she was happy, Lapisia was skipping the whole time.

The beastfolks were on the premises of the residence.

They were treated to bread and soup from a big pot by Clarissa and Minya.

Mahal noticed me and approached while his two bushy tails were swinging around.

"Keika-sama, thank you very much for taking us in."

"You still don't have a place to live yet. Should we build you some huts to the norther of the residence?"

"Yes, that would be great. What will be our work later?"

"Beastfolks are strong, right? Please let the men follow Melvius's orders to construct the buildings. The women and children will work on the fields."

"Understood. We'll work with all our might."

Mahal was humbly replying.

I took Lapisia and entered the mansion.

Lapisia rushed to the dining room. She's lively.

I lie down on the bed after I entered my room.

"*Sigh~*. I'm tired. The World Tree tired me out. For a moment I thought that I wouldn't be able to return to the heavens. Even so, a bath... I should have mounted the dragon and get into her hot spring... hm? A hot spring?"

Since pipes exist, can't I just dig up a hot spring near the village and draw the water to this house?

Or if I'd make a public bath I could invite even more people to the village.

"Should I look into it tomorrow?... No, it's no good. This is a farming village after all."

Hot spring water contains lots of minerals and there are many acidic and alkaline

components as well. If it contained a huge quantity of salt or sulfur, and the water would flow into the irrigation water, the fields might become infertile.

I wouldn't know the ingredients until the water is dug up and examined.

"Maybe I should make canals for maintenance and drainage. Should I also make underground sewers?"

While I was thinking about that, there was a knocking sound.

Next, there was a dignified and cool voice.

"Keika-sama, may I enter?"

"It's open, Celica"

"Excuse me"

Celica's blond hair is swaying while she comes in.

She comes to the bed and sits down.

"You look tired, Keika-sama"

"A little. Various things have happened--"

I told Celica about today.

Her blue eyes showed amazement. She was so surprised that she put her hand to her mouth.

"Oh! Such things have happened! I'm really glad that World Tree-sama is alive."

"That's right. The world has almost ended-- and it's probably also thanks to the World Tree, that I've met you..."

"So it was like that... I'm grateful that I met you, Keika-sama."

Celica smiled and grabbed my hand.

It felt unsatisfactory, so I pulled her closer to me.

Since she stopped onto me, I hugged her tightly. Her big breasts, that are pressing against me, are squeezed.

"As expected, you let me calm down the most after all."

"*Au*... Ke-Keika-sama"

I recovered by stroking Celica until dinner was served.



I left the mansion to the east the next day after I had finished my breakfast.

I was accompanied by the female beastfolks and guided by the farming instructor Gordon.

A farming instructor is a farmer, who can teach, which earth is suitable for what crops and how they're best grown.

Since the Daphnes Kingdom is an agricultural country, he was the most expensive one among the conditional slaves.

I stood in front of the wasteland and spoke.

"I've got this bag of soba, which I want to sow and harvest. You don't have to think about the time. Soba is better suited to be grown in wasteland, right?"

Gordon answers.

"Let's see. It would grow too fast in the fertile soil to the west and south of the village and would just collapse under its own weight and wither. Around here should be okay."

"So it's like that. Then, can you please sow this bag of soba?"

"Can we burn off the field?"

"Ah, sure. Just say what should be done."

Strictly speaking, the permission of the mayor would be needed if someone wanted to burn off a field. Well, I can just get the permission later.

And even if the fire should spread, I can immediately extinguish it since I'm a god of water and wind.

After Gordon had specified the size and I had burned the weeds, the beastfolks began to cultivate the field.

They made ridges and planted the seeds at suitable intervals.

Once they were done, I brought Lapisia over.

"Can you let this grow? I want it to grow by about a month."

It'll have to be at least that much because I want to harvest it before the snow.

However, Lapisia had a difficult expression of her face when she touched the soil.

"Many seeds are still sleeping. Can we give them maybe three more days?"

"Is that so. Then I'll leave it to you."

"Yes! --Can I go play?"

"Sure, have fun!"

"Hooray!"

Lapisia rushed towards the village.

"Well then, Gordon. I'll leave the field to you."

"I'll thoroughly look over it."

In addition, I restored the barrier and looked at the progress of the buildings.

I was also looking into a drainage just in case I'd find a hot spring.



Three days later, the soba was sprouting.

I asked Lapisia to let it grow.

"Hmmm~, *ha!*"

Her hands, that she had put on the field, were glowing yellow, and the soba grew at once.

The plants were as high as a person's chest and some flowers have bloomed as well.

Since the weeds have also grown, they looked like a green carpet.

"Soba is pretty high, isn't it?"

"More than this, and the ground would weaken, so it's no good. Also, they'd be damaged by rain and wind."

"Oh, is that so? Thank you."

Lapisia was happily squinting when I stroked her head.

She slightly twisted her body and looked a little embarrassed.

The eyes of the farming instructor Gordon, who stood next to us, were filled with amazement.

"Fo-For such a magic to exist..."

"Well, a hero party should be able to do at least that much."

"It's amazing! As expected of a hero!"

Although I gave a halfhearted response, I received overwhelming admiration.

"I'll leave the rest in your care."

"Yes, Hero-sama-- Everyone, remove all the weeds! After that, thin out this area!"

He instructed them to remove all the weeds, that had grown together with the soba, and to thin out the areas where the soba was growing too dense.

They seem to eat the thinned out soba leaves.

Lapisia speaks.

"Is there anything else to do?"

"Hmm--, lets' see... *ah*, can you pave the roads with stone?"

The roads in the previously saved Roni Village were paved with stone, which looked quite fashionable.

There's also the advantage that horses and carts can more easily transport goods.

Lapisia clutched her fist in confidence.

"If it's stone, I can do it!"

"Very well, I'll leave it to you. Make it as even as possible."

"Yes!"

Lapisia jumped to the road and put her hands on the ground with a *petan*.

She moaned with "*mumumu*" and her hands glowed yellow.

Well, I had expected that she can do this.

"It's magnificently paved."

The road to the village is about 1.5 or two meters wide.

It was gray, hard stone.

Since the lowest level of the terrain was used as reference, several parts of the road were still covered with soil.

It'll be washed away with the next rain.

The pavement continued to the forest in the east and to the fields in the west.

"Is this fine?"

Lapisia tilted her head. Her twin tails are gently flowing.

"It's awesome. As expected you you. I'll ask to make your favorite things for today's dinner."

"Really!? Hooray!"

Because Lapisia hugged me, I stroked her head while saying "*well done, well done*".

I thought that I should praise her a lot more, since she has done lots of benefiting things for all the the villagers.

Next I let her also pave the way to the shrine on the residence's premises in the same way and then let her go playing. By the way, there was no gravel.

I leisurely stroll around the village while the autumn sunlight is pouring down.

The village was in a building rush.

Following the inn, the houses for the beastfolks were made.

The bath and a store to sell the talismans have also been completed.

And the number of people who wanted to move to the village was also increasing.

Some of the people had lost their fields to demons while others didn't have enough to eat and came to ask for employment.

It seems that the rumor has spread quite wide, that Keika Village is protected by a hero.

Since the harvest and drying would follow the field work and since there is a building rush, the more people there are, the better.

My believers are steadily increasing.

The believers now exceeded 1500 when I looked at my hand with "Truth Sight".

It's a good trend.

A villager is passing by.

"G-Good morning, Hero-sama!"

"Yes, good morning."

"Are you the one who paved the road with stone, Hero-sama?"

"...Well, I'm certainly responsible for that I guess..."

-- The one who actually did it was Lapisia though. But it's not a lie since I didn't say that I did it personally.

"To turn the road into stone in an instant..."

"Are you complaining?"

"N-No way, it's amazing! Thank you very much!"

The villager lowered his head many times over and left.

Other people had similar reactions and had complex expressions of delight and shock on their faces.

The carrot and stick policy seems to be too effective.

Well, It'd be troublesome if'd get targeted again, so it should be fine.

The fields are growing well.

The harvest will be soon.

Since the new reservoir was now filled to a half, I stopped the inflow, thinking about the autumn rain.

If only that much water is used, I was thinking about a new industry that would create jobs.

In other words, I planned to cultivate fish. I wonder why that's not done yet.

I was walking in the sunlight that shone through the trees.

I haven't been contacted by neither Leo nor Lilille, which means that there are no immediate errands for me to do.

I thought about visiting the neighboring villages.

Even if there are only small troubles, it would be a good way to sell my name if they are resolved by the hero in person.

When I was thinking about these things, Bailey, who was responsible for the cattle approached on a horse.

This village only has few cattle, but I wanted to increase it since the land has increased.

Bailey has taken care of the horses, hence I assigned him to that post. He hasn't purchased any new cattle yet though.

Bailey came to my side and spoke.

"Keika-sama, something has arrived for you. It has been brought to the mayor's house. Please come by soon."

"What is it? I'll go at once."

The package for me was placed in the courtyard of the mayor's house.

It is a box with a height of about two meters.

"What is this... western village Kerkia... ah! Is it done?"

"What is it?"

Bailey asked in the curious voice.

I spoke while I smiled broadly.

"This is the ordered hero statue."

"Eh!? It can't be, of yourself?"

"How would the people otherwise know how I look like?"

"That's... true, but..."

I wanted to quickly set it up, so I lifted the box with a "*hyoi!*"

"I hope that the people want to see what it is and will come to the premises."

"Wow! It took three adult men to carry the box under great pains."

"It's no big deal. See you."

"Yes, understood... but, I still can't believe it."

I leave the shocked looking Bailey behind and returned to the mansion.

I brought it to the front shrine, which also acts as a Kagura stage, in the center of the garden.

When I opened the box, the bronze statue, that was wrapped in cushioning material, appeared.

The shape was taken with a slime that hardens in an instant when heat is applied to it. It was astonishingly accurate.

Only the mold of the face has been a little been tempered with to highlight the facial features.

--Hmm, I don't think I look that cool...

For someone born in Japan I've got quite the distinctive facial features, but it's a rather plain looking race to begin with.

Well, I decided not to mind it since beautification is a part of art.

I put the life-sized bronze statue in the center of the front shrine's floor.

I used "Clairvoyance" to align it with the room where I will install the object of worship in.

"And for the finishing touch-- 'Blue Water Seal'"

I use magic to mark the position on the floor.

That way the statue can always be put back to the correct place, since it will be moved aside during Kagura performances.

Then, with a rustling sound, Minya came with her swinging, black tail.

She seemed to have drawn water from the well.

"Keika Onii-chan, what's this?"

"It's a statue for worshiping me, maybe it's a little too glorified though..."

"Hmmm..."

Minya alternatively looked at me and the bronze statue.

Then she touched my face with her hand and spoke.

"The real one is more cool. It's mysterious."

"Is that so. Then I'm glad."

Minya looks further at the front shrine.

"Rain and sunlight will hit the statue... Should I surround it with cloth from three sides?"

"Ah--, that's right, but the sides should be sufficient. The front and back should be open while pieces of cloth can be tied to the pillars at the sides. That way the wind can pass through."

"Yup, understood."

Her pointy cat ears are moving.

"...next, I'll need an offertory box, huh."

"Offertory box ? "

"Shrine visitors will say their prayers to the statue, right? At that time they'll put money in the offertory box."

"That's the first time I heard about something like that."

"Well, I guess it's not done in this country. Donations to the gods are handled by the priests. The chance that the inserted money gets stolen is high though."

"Yes yes. It'll be dangerous."

"I'll have to think about something-- Can you please stow this box away?"

"Yes. I'll put it in the storage room."

I went around the mansion toward the backyard.

When I had parted ways with Minya, she was looking at the front shrine and murmured "quickly... want to dance".

Chapter 90

Hazardous fairy Haya and fermentation

I entered the workshop of the fairy Haya to ask her to make an offertory box.

The door was set up in the way, that only the hero party or people with the "Light"-attribute can enter.

It's a small workshop with the size of about five tatamis.

However, since everything was down-sized to be used by a fairy of 30 centimeters, it was extravagantly spacious to the fairy in question.

Devices that seemed to be prototypes with unknown purposes were lined up on the shelves at the walls. A lot of devices were equipped with rotation mechanisms. Did she practice for the paddle steamer with these?

Haya was sitting at a work table and stopped moving her hands, that were swinging a hammer and a chisel.

"Welcome, Keika-san!"

"You seem to make all sorts of things, huh."

"It's thanks to you, Keika-san! I can freely pursue my ideas. Thank you."

I took one of the devices off a shelf. It's a round ball that has a helicopter-like propeller attached to it.

"Freely pursued technology is the best. What's this?"

"That's a 'Drorone'. It uses a 'Ghost Core' and can take pictures from above. Do you want to see?"

Somehow, an unpleasant premonition haunted me and I picked up the next device. It's long and narrow and has a propeller at its bottom side.

"This is?"

"That makes use of a compressed 'Dragon Breath' and is an 'Intercontinental Ballistic

Love Letter Delivery Machine'. It reaches the chest of the recipient with an error margin of one centimeter."

"Heh. --How fast is it when it arrives?"

"Maybe about 8 kilometers per second?"

"Rejected!"

"*Haa*?? Why?? Delivering love letters is one of the jobs that a fairy has to do!"

Haya complained to me while making her round eyes roll.

"The recipient will die! The town might even disappear!"

"That would indeed be a problem. Then I should also make a love letter reception machine I guess."

I feel that this is going into the wrong direction.

I took the model of a propeller plane. It's a biplane.

"Don't create anything that's too different from this world's technology. At least keep it down to something like biplanes... by the way, what is this?"

"That's an 'Ultra-High-Altitude Stealth-Tactic Bouquet Presentation Machine'. It can deliver a bouquet of flowers with an error margin of three centimeters from a height of 55000 meters, that even dragons or magic won't reach. You can have a peace of mind even if you don't have air superiority. It's just like out of a fairy tale--'

"...now I feel like the fairies should be left to die after all."

"*uu*", Haya's face distorts.

"That's terrible... you're the one who told me about it. Although I only took paddle steamers, steam engines, springs, gears, crank mechanisms, screws, gas properties and the dynamic lift as references."

I sighed.

Did she develop the technology so fast because I told her about the earth's technology? She pestered me several times to talk about the earth, but to think that she adopted those things so easily...

I'm glad that I haven't told her about nuclear fission.

"My bad. But, don't refer to the things I've told you too much. Those are ideas from a different dimension after all."

"Yeees."

Haya obediently nodded. She's cute when she's docile.

"*cough*", I coughed and spoke.

"So, there's something I want you to make."

"What is it?"

"It's an offertory box. It's a box of about this size and money can be put inside."

I indicated the size with my hands.

"Hmm. For what purpose?"

"I want to set it up in front of the front shrine in the center of the premises for people to put money inside, but I want to make it in a way, that the money can't be stolen. Additionally, I want it to make a sound when money is put inside."

"Can't you catch a 'Mimic Box' and tame it?"

"I'd have a really bad feeling about that. I want something with a less dangerous feel to it."

Haya spoke after thinking hard.

"Then, no one would be able to steal the money if you keep the box constantly heated to several thousand degrees Celsius."

"Isn't that idea strange!? The village will burn down and the surroundings will turn to magma. The money will evaporate as well."

"*Uu~*, it's difficult..."

"You don't have to think that complicated, can't you come up with something simpler? Things like installing a fairy door at the bottom of the box that transfers the money to the house."

"Oh~. Nice idea! It's as if you've got the mind of a fairy."

"No way! But let's go into that direction for now-- Ah, what I also wanted to know, can you make a "Darkness"-attribute detection device from scratch? And also enhance it

to react to demons?"

"Sure. I can make it when I take the ball from before as reference. Should it be the same sphere shape?"

"No, it should be the same size as me. Please take the bronze statue at the front shrine as reference. But make sure that you're not seen."

"Yees. I'll take a look at it with the 'Drorone'."

"I'll leave it to you."

She started to work at once, so I left the workshop.

I leisurely walk through the backyard.

I think I'm done with everything I wanted to do with the residence.

What's left is to choose a suitable object of worship.

With regards to the village, I want to build a hospital and a school once everything related to housing is done. They should attract people, who will certainly be grateful. This should increase my believers.

Also, once the field work and harvest is done, there will be more people available, which means that I should be able to add even more buildings.

The mansion's bath has also been completed in the backyard near the dining room.

The dressing room is right behind the entrance and in the back are a washing place and the bath. The bath tub is large enough for five of six people. If it's too big, it'll require a lot of energy to heat the water, hence I had decided on a medium size.

But most importantly, I finally have the bath that I had longed for.

I'll go in later.

I met Clarissa when I passed by the kitchen behind the house. She carried dry firewood.

"Oh. Keika-sama. Please wait a little longer until dinner."

"I don't mind. Ah, that's right!"

There was still another matter that I wanted to tackle.

Clarissa raised her voice and looked surprised.

"What happened?"

"I've seen some pickled leaf vegetables the other day, but are there also other fermented foods?"

"Fermented food? You mean like cheese or wine?"

"That's right. Are there others? For example are there fermented steamed rice or beans, or might the juices that are produced during that process used for seasoning?"

"How are the beans processed after they've been steamed?"

"I think, salt and 'Kouji' are added and then they are put in an airtight barrel."

"'Kouji'?"

"It's a kind of mold that grows on rice or bread but isn't toxic."

"Finding harmless mold might be difficult..."

"So it's like that after all"

Although there were all kinds of ingredients from all over the continent available for the cooking contest in the dragon's dungeon, there were neither rice, nor miso nor soy sauce. There were fermented fish and meat sauces though.

This means that it's known that easily rotting fish or meat can be preserved by pickling it in salt.

The fermented fish and meat sauces were the resulting products of the natural fermentation. The taste is good but the strong smell is a weakness.

Just like it works with rice and wheat, beans can also be preserved in the same way after they've been steamed and pickled in salt, but I wonder why it's done.

Maybe it's because of the high humidity in Japan and China, which leads to natural germination and the beans hence can't be stored for a whole year...

I didn't really know about it since I never had an interest in it.

To begin with, I received meals as offerings but I never did them myself.

Clarissa spoke.

"In short, steamed beans and wheat should be pickled in salt, right?"

"That's the idea."

"But there's the proverb 'You should neither let your lover nor your bean soup wait'."

"I get the meaning more or less. It'll be dangerous if it's left alone for too long. Overall, when thinking about the possibility that poisonous mold will grow, I feel that I should be present when it is eaten since I can heal with magic."

"Understood. I'll make it for testing."

Then Minya peeked with her face through the rear entrance. Her triangular ears are moving swiftly.

"Test, you said?"

"Ah, maybe I should ask for your help as well, since you're also skilled at cooking."

Clarissa nods to my words.

"Minya-chan has amazing skills. I'm familiar with the cuisines of a lot of places, but she'll surpass me before long."

Minya learned the cuisine of Edelstein by helping Clarissa, and her cooking level has already reached 30.

If Minya participates, she can also think about ways to pickle beans in salt.

Of course I told them everything I knew.

I don't know what's of importance, so I told them about how stones are placed on the airtight barrels, how the beans are immediately laid out in an even room after they've been steamed, how many days they are heated and so on.

Well, I guess I can consider myself lucky it works out.

Since it's a different world, who knows what kinds of deadly poison might be born from that.

I thought about giving Haya information about bacteria and enzymes for a moment, but then abandoned the idea because she might just begin to create bacterial weapons at once.

I was thinking about making miso and soy sauce into local specialties of Keika Village. They are easy to transport since they can be stored over a long time. I can sell my

name. And the people will have a lifeline should there be a bad harvest, so it should increase my believers. There are only benefits.

And even if it's difficult or might even fail, I don't have anything to lose.



It became evening and we're eating dinner together.

Lapisia's favorite food - sausages - were brought out onto the table.

Since meat was expensive, it was a luxury in the village.

Also, sausages were rare in this country. And intestines are usually either thrown away or immediately cooked because they'll quickly spoil.

Lapisia yells after she bit into it.

"Tasty!"

"It's also tasty if you put it between the bread and apply some sauce."

She puts the sausage in the bread, applies some sweet sauce and stuffs it in her mouth.

She gulps down while her eyes are sparkling with happiness.

"Hm! Tasty! Thank you, Keika!"

"But also eat vegetables! You can put them in between."

"Ye-Yes!"

While Lapisia looked puzzled, she did as she was told, put the vegetables in between and started to eat.

"You worked hard today after all. It's your reward."

"I'll also work hard tomorrow!"

"Hm--, I don't really have any work for you for a while. Whether you'll play or study, just do your best."

"Ugh~, yes, I'll do my best..."

Lapisia looked somewhat sad and frowned. But she kept lively eating the sausages with the bread without interruption.

At that time, Fioria's hand, that she used to eat her soup, stopped moving.

She gazed into the empty space and muttered "Ah... yes... understood".

I felt faint magic power.

"What's wrong, Fioria?"

"Keika-sama. I was just contacted by my companions and they seem to have found it."

It's probably about the World Tree.

She seemed to keep her wording vague because Clarissa and the slave girl Ena were in the room.

"So it was like that then? Aren't you glad?"

"Everyone seemed troubled whether all of them should move and how to get to the west in that case."

"There's something I want them to do. It'll surely be of benefit to the humans and the elves alike."

--And also for me. It'll increase my believers further!

"You have such an idea!? Understood, I'll tell my companions."

"Let's talk about it once the elves have returned."

"Yes, understood."

Fioria lowered her head. Her green hair covers her cheeks.

Rii, who sat beside her, spoke.

"Keika-san, thank you for the sake of everyone."

"Well, I'm also doing it for myself, so don't mind it."

However-- I was deep in thoughts.

While I'm glad that the World Tree is alive, its location is bad.

The Demon Lord's territory is only a little further away after leaving the large forest.

It'll soon be found if it keeps growing like that.

There's no way that it can be protected by 500 elves, and I can't always come rushing to help. It'll be especially in danger if the Demon Lord's army attacks while I'm busy

dealing with the Demon Lord, the last guy of the Four Heavenly Kings or another annoying opponent.

The region, where the beastfolks are living in, is at the northern side of the forest and I could make it into a first line of defense if I'd annex it. That would make it easier to protect the World Tree.

However, even if I'd drive the Demon Lord's army away and reinforce the beastfolks, there isn't enough food to maintain that region.

Also it'll take time for them to be able to defend themselves even if I'm not around.

In that case, I guess I don't have a choice but to protect them for a while.

Hence---

"The time is overwhelmingly short... The food reserves of the beastfolks will be soon used up and it'll be a gamble whether they'll make it through the winter or not."

"Keika-sama? Are you troubled?"

"I guess. Maybe you can give me some advice later."

"Yes, Keika-sama. I want to help you in any way I can."

Celica smiled happily.

Just looking at her smile was making me feel better.

I also wanted to do my best for her.

Chapter 91

Harvest

The harvest began in the morning in a hurry.

Originally it was planned a few days later, but I had warned them that it would rain from tomorrow on.

There was a danger of burgeoning if the ripe wheat would get wet.

Almost all slaves and beastfolks participated.

I and Celica were meeting a catfolk girl in the reception room.

She has bright, brown hair and cat ears. She's small, but her arms and legs are very, very supple. There weren't any surplus muscles. She was 20 years old, but she looked younger.

"Good morning, Keika-sama. I'm Anila and I'm a messenger nya."

"You went around the beastfolk district, right?"

"Yes. I delivered letters and messages to all the villages nya. Running is my strong point, so I can quickly flee from danger nya."

"Then can you please tell me the locations of the beastfolk villages and their populations, where the Demon Lord's army's garrisons, fortresses and so on are, and also give me a general overview of the terrain?"

I showed her the map that Celica had drawn with a pen.

Since Celica's country had relations with the beastfolk district, she knew the rough geography.

"Yes nya... hmm, here is the catfolk village and there are still about five injured and old people remaining. When going to the northwest there's a hill where about 70 tigerfolks live. In the forest is a settlement of about 900 wolffolks and dogfolks. Bearfolks are living half-way up the mountain, but only about ten. They are usually

walking around the mountain. In the grove to the north live 200 boarfolks and 60 tanukifolks. To the north of the forest is a fortress..."

There are about 25 beastfolk tribes and about 2300 beastfolks. It's even less than I thought.

Apparently they were forced to work by the Demon Lord's army or fled to different places. Others have been made into food and the like, hence the population had decreased.

But it seems that an ordinary village only had about hundred inhabitants to begin with.

Celica adds the information from Anila to the map.

"There were also about five other tribes in the past, but they vanished. They probably fled or were attacked by the Demon Lord's army and wiped out."

"There are also some tribes whose overall population is only in the single digits, huh. Three dragonfolks, five snakefolks, two elephantfolks and six lionfolks. Aren't they pretty much extinct?"

"They challenged the Demon Lord's army and were defeated. They were almost completely slaughtered. Additionally, they also reduced the number of cats, mice, foxes and deer, who had cooperated."

"The cowfolks are also quite few with only about ten."

"Since all female cowfolks have huge breasts, they are kidnapped as playthings by the demons. And later their fate is to be eaten. The males are eaten when they're young. Apparently they are the most tastiest among the beastfolks."

"That's tragic. They've probably been brought to higher echelons of the Demon Lord's army... That reminds me, there is also one among the sheltered beastfolks. She certainly has huge breasts."

"The cowfolk Sujita-san was supposed to be eaten at the victory banquet, so I'm really glad for your help."

"She was supposed to be eaten?"

"The plan was to force-feed her with wheat porridge until her stomach swelled and then roast her in whole."

"...I'm glad that it didn't come to that. On the other hand quite a lot of tribes are going along with the Demon Lord's army..."

"We did it to survive, we didn't have a choice nya. Please forgive us, Hero-sama."

Anila lowered her head. Her cat ears were drooping.

I wondered why she was sometimes ending her sentences with "nya".

"I don't really plan to blame you. You didn't know whether you wouldn't be attacked instead... well, I've got a general idea of the locations of the Demon Lord's army's towns and fortresses. That's quite helpful, so thank you for that."

"Nya! It's an honor to be of use to you! I'll help you wherever I can as long as it's nothing scary!"

Anila's tail stood straight and she held her head high.

"Scary?"

"The demon's were constantly pursuing me. That's why I'm quick on foot to run away."

"I see. That's hard."

"That's why I feel relieved that I can live in this village."

"That's good to hear. --So what's left is Sujita since she's the only cowfolk. She might be suffering, so please convey the message that they should be careful not to bully her to Mahal."

"To think even of the small details, as expected of a hero! I'll immediately tell him nya!"

Then she left enthusiastically.

It seems that she'll help on the fields once she has conveyed the message.

After that only I and Celica were left.

Celica speaks while brushing her blond hair back with her hand.

"I'd like to help them, but their location is bad."

"There are fewer than expected. It'll be difficult to defend them as of now."

"Yes... even if we'd make it into a self-governing dominion and add it to the Daphnes Kingdom, we won't be able to rush there if they are attacked."

"Since the large forest acts as a barrier, it's a hindrance when they are attacked. That's why I want to make it possible to rush there at any time."

"What should we do. It can't be, do you already have an idea, Keika-sama?"

"There is a way. I could use a fairy door."

Celica's blue eyes had an astonished look in them as she nodded.

"...if you say you can do it, you can do it, Keika-sama!"

"Yeah, leave it to me."

I stretched my hand out and stroked Celica's head. Touching her blond hair feels pleasant.

Celica's cheeks are blushing. She's leaning against me.

"*Ah*... I'll also work hard."

I separated from her after feeling her body temperature for a while. I head to another place.

I left the mansion in Celica's care.



I go around the mansion, to Haya's workshop in the backyard.

As usual, the four heads tall Haya was creating something on the workbench. Her small hands left afterimages behind as they moved.

"You're enthusiastic even in the morning."

"Oh. Is it already morning? Good morning. I asked Rii-san to install the donation box."

"Ah, thank you for the help. So, have you decided on the specifications for the paddle steamer?"

"The plans are done, so I could make in in four or five days. I'll make large wheels and

connect them with a shaft to the Golem Core. All that's left is to bring it to a harbor and install them into an existing ship."

"Creating the hull as well is impossible, huh."

"I don't have any coworkers after all. My hands are too small for that."

Haya looks down with a sad face. Her triangular hat is drooping.

"It won't be long. I'll go to the frontier continents and take back the fairy world."

"Ah! Is that true? Thank you very much, Keika-san!"

Her eyes suddenly sparkled after she's been looking down depressed.

"That's why, please begin with the construction."

"Yes. By the way, I came up with even better ideas than a paddle steamer..."

"That gives me a bad premonition..."

Haya spoke with her hand proudly on her chest.

"The paddle steamer has bad energy-efficiency. You could make it to the frontier continents in three days if you'd use a jet engine."

"Heh. But won't the hull break into pieces from the waves."

"It can withstand them with magic~. Also, it'll perform better if it's screwed together. It'll last for one week. After that it'll start to leak but that can also be prevented with magic."

"Rejected"

Haya's eyes were tearing when I immediately answered.

"Why~!?"

"If we rely on magic too much, we'll be annihilated when we encounter a demon that can dispel magic. And even if it's not a monster, there are also magic dispelling barriers. I'd like for it to drive without any magic if possible."

"I see. I get that you've thought deeply about it. It's no problem if it matches the humans' technology, right?"

"That's what I mean. Please tell me or Celica if you need some materials. Then, I'll leave it to you."

"Yeees"

Haya took her hammer again and started to process metal.



In the evening, the harvest was finished.

The fields were divided into several parts and wheat was put there to dry.

The people were still picking up fallen ears.

However, since the big job that they had to do once a year was over, everyone was radiantly smiling.

The villagers and the beastfolks were still somewhat distant, but they have started to open their hearts when they've helped with the harvest.

It was a good trend.

And since it seemed to take some time, I and Lapisia helped as well.

Reaping the golden wheat was fun.

Lapisia speaks while she looks at the piled up wheat.

"There's so much wheat!"

"Thanks for the hard work. What's left are the threshing and the drying."

"Threshing?"

"Removing the wheat grains from the stalks. --Look, just like that!"

The villagers were pulling the wheat through a threading machine that looked like a comb with thousand teeth.

"Wow~"

Lapisia looked astonished when she gazed at the scene. She seemed to be deeply moved emotionally.

I stroked Lapisia's head. I can feel the warm body temperature of a child.

"By the way, thank you for the help."

"Was I... a good girl?"

"Yes, you've been a good girl."

Then she put her thin arms around my body and hugged me tightly.

She frowned for some reason and spoke.

"How much... was I a good girl?"

"You were a really good girl. A really, really good girl."

"I'm happy..."

She buried her face in my stomach.

She's slightly trembling.

--Somehow, she looks different from usual.

I ask her while I hug her slender body.

"What's wrong, Lapisia?"

Then she speaks as if she's whispering while she hugs me.

"...Say, Keika."

"Hm?"

"How much?"

"What is it?"

She raised her face to my words. Her young face shows the expression of an adult.

"How much do I have to be a good girl to meet mother?"

Tears were floating in Lapisia's golden eyes.

I caught my breath.

Lapisia has been a good girl all along.

She rescued the World Tree, improved the village and listened to anything I told her.

She listened to all my orders and requests without even one complain at all.

Although she doesn't like studying or vegetables, she still endures everything well.

She only throws a tantrum when her Mother Earth God instincts are kicking in for the sake of the world.

I thought that she did it because she has mentally grown.

Of course she has, but maybe she also tried to be a good girl the more she missed her mother.

Did she everything because she wanted to see her mother as soon as possible?

--I want to let her meet her. Even if it's only short.

I hugged her body tightly. It's a pure body without any dirt. Her body is warm.

I buried my face in her blue hair while I spoke.

"You can meet her soon."

"Keika!? Is that true!?"

"Yeah, it's true."

"Keika... love!"

Lapisia hugged me tightly.

With the whole strength of her thin arms.

I thought that my ribs would break.

I endured it with all my strength and gently patted her back.

Chapter 92

The elves' future

It was a rainy day.

I set up an object of worship in the storeroom of the mansion.

I actually planned to bring a rugged rock from a mountain stream here, but since it was troublesome, I had decided to use a mirror for now.

I placed a simple altar in the back of the room and precisely aligned it. And it's done.

My head with my black hair and black eyes is reflected in the mirror. I grinned.

It's been about hundred years since I had my own shrine, so it couldn't be helped that I was happy.

Nonetheless, I have to work harder to gather more believers. There are only 11 months left until the Demon Lord's return.

Then Rii came in.

"Keika-san, everyone has arrived. They have gathered a little apart from the village."

Rii stumbled over some raw materials that weren't properly stowed away.

I moved quickly and caught the falling girl. Her slender body leans against my arms. It's a flexible and soft body of a growing person.

"Are you alright?"

"Yes... thank you."

Rii was blushing and nodded in my arms. Her green hair smoothly flows.

She panted with a small "*au... *" when I held her tightly.

I let her stand up and spoke.

"Then, shall we go?"

"Yup"

Rii nodded while having a gallant smile floating on her face. Her cheeks were red.

By the way, I had set up a magic circle that only lets Celica, Minya, Fal and Rii enter the storeroom.

Fioria was waiting outside the room.

"I'm sorry you have to do this in the rain."

"I don't mind, let's go."

We went outside and left the residence.

I'm guided by Fioria and Rii and we head northwards from the village.

--One hour later, we met up with about 200 elves.

The chieftain Jagd steps forward and lowers his head.

"Keika-sama. Thank you for coming in the rain."

"Don't worry about it. I don't dislike the rain."

"Then... you said that you wanted something from us?"

"That's right. First of all, I want you to stop moving with everyone. It'll be suspicious if you all suddenly disappear."

"Yes, that's why we thought that about half of us should remain there."

"That's good. I want the stump to remain as a fake World Tree. --And with that regard, I want you to make the stump into a tourist attraction."

""Eh!?"""

Voices of surprise rose from the elves. Some are even gazing at me with obvious criticism.

Well, it's only natural.

I heard that elves refrain from interacting with humans.

Jagd frowned with his beautiful face.

"We should invite humans...?"

"That's right. Even though it's just the stump, that big tree is certainly magnificent. It shouldn't only be seen by the elves but also the humans to feel the greatness of all the trees in the world that come along with it. Also you can tell them the story about the dreadful Demon Lord and the frightening Barrier Muuk and how Hero Keika repulsed the evil. It'll become a great tourism spot!"

--Of course it'll also lead to an increase of believers.

"Will it really be okay to make a show out of your deeds...?"

"I'm happy that you think about that. But, there are still a lot of people who don't know about it and are frightened from the shadow of the Demon Lord. To give them a peace of mind, even if you have to exaggerate, shouldn't you convey the deeds of the hero to them?"

"I see... certainly, we have suffered very much as well."

I made a serious face when I told them my proposal. That was the preface for the main subject.

"Also, you aren't paying any taxes, right? Rather than being a self-governing region recognized by the Fabrica Kingdom, you should pay taxes. Then there's a high chance that they'll cooperate with you against the Demon Lord's army. Also it'll increase the interaction with the humans."

Jagd's and the other elves' beautiful faces distorted and looked troubled.

"Taxes, you say... We have almost no income... And even if we could sell woodwork, we have no materials due to the desertification. Also they are handmade and can't be mass-produced. Since it's in a desert, there's not really much to see for sightseeing and we don't have anything else to sell, so it doesn't seem that we could pay."

"You can purchase materials from the humans after you've amassed a lot of money by selling your other specialty beside woodwork."

"Our other specialty...? What could that be..."

Jagd tilted his head.

I giggled and spoke.

"You have one, right? You have a huge amount of salt! One ton of ocean water contains 20 kilograms of salt. You should have tens of thousands or even hundreds of thousands

of tons of salt. Just call it 'Elf Salt' and sell it with the message of 'That's why the elves are living that long' as sales strategy and you can easily take twice the regular price. But don't forget to add the warning that eating too much of it will be harmful."

Jagd and the other elves who were sitting in a row had their mouths gaping open and were lost for words.

"Se-Selling that salt..." "Something like that..." "I only thought about it as the bad stuff that weakened the World Tree..." "It's the idea of the hero who saved the world!"

"Doesn't that sound good? Of course you'll impose a limit on it. That way it'll be a rare product. And once you've built some shops and accommodation facilities, you can build a stone road from the World Tree to Industria."

Suddenly the dumbfounded Jagd got on his knees and saluted.

"Keika-sama, I am deeply impressed. Not only did you defeat the demons but also thought about our future lives!"

All the other elves knelt down simultaneously. Maybe out of deep emotion there were even women with tears floating in their eyes when they looked up to me."

Moreover, they knelt in the rain-soaked mud.

I received their highest respect.

Jagd speaks further.

"Certainly, we elves haven't interacted with the humans so far. As a result, we ended up protecting the World Tree alone."

"I guessed so. Everyone has to work together to oppose the Demon Lord's army."

"Those words, I'll engrave them onto heart."

"It's alright already. Please stand up, everyone."

The elves stand up. The beautiful men and women are full of mud. But everyone has a beaming smile on their faces."

Jagd speaks with a heartfelt voice.

"We'll follow your proposal and will focus on tourism and product sales and try to find a way to cooperate with the humans. We'll leave hundred strong and hundred eloquent, prejudice-free people at the stump."

"Yeah, give it your all. It might take a lot of time though to correct the misunderstandings and prejudices against your customs."

Jagd reveals a smile from his face.

"In that regard we have more than enough of that. We're a long-lived species after all."

"You're right."

I also smiled back.

"Well then, we'll go. Thank you very much for even saving the elves' future."

"I still don't know whether it'll work out, but I wish you a bright future. Take care."

"Yes!"

Jagd looks at Fioria.

"Fioria, you'll stay by Keika-sama's side and support him."

"Yes, Jagd-sama. I plan to serve him with all my might."

"We'll leave this wonderful person in your care."

The elves are lowering their heads and leave.

"Thank you very much, Keika-sama" "You've brought us hope" "Thank you very much for coming to aid" "We'll work hard for a better future"

They left northwards in the rain. They were very light on their feet.

Finally, only I, Fioria and Rii were left.

Fioria's huge breasts shook as she lowered her head.

"Keika-sama. Really, thank you very much. We'd never would have thought about such a way."

"Keika-san... you're amazing. I respect you very much!"

Rii's eyes were sparkling while she praised me. Her eyes were full of enthusiasm when she looked up at me.

I was a bit perplexed.

Actually I did it for myself. I simply wanted to increase my believers.

I wonder why they are adoring me that much.

My haughty behavior hasn't changed from the past. I wonder why the response is so different from the earth.

Is it because they can see me...? No, that's not it. Then, what could it be...

I seemed to have noticed something, but I still don't get it.

I shook my head, turned my back to them and began to walk towards the village.

"Well then, we'll catch a cold if we stay in the rain any longer. Let's go home."

"S-Say, Keika-san!"

Rii was clinging to my arm.

Her small breasts are pressing against me.

"What is it?"

"I, wife... no, it's nothing, after all."

"Rii. You mustn't say anything that might embarrass Keika-sama!"

Fioria, who was walking next to me, gave out a warning.

"Eh~ ... Yeees."

Rii dejectedly casts her eyes down. Water is dripping down her shoulder-long green hair.

I speak.

"That's right. I'm the only one who's allowed to make embarrassing proposals. I'll take a bath with you two once we've returned."

""Eh!?"""

They raised their voices in surprise. Their faces were blushed beet-red.

"We have to warm our bodies since we got wet from the rain."

"Yes..." "*uu*... I have to prepare my mind..."

I returned to the village while enjoying the shy behavior of the women to my left and right.

We went into the bath right when we returned.

Of course including some naked socializing.

Probably because Fioria had made up her mind, her huge breasts were magnificently exposed, but Rii covered her slender body with a towel.

When she even tried to get into the bathtub with the towel I made her stop. She was red to the ears when she exposed everything.

It's true, elves in the nude are beautiful like a piece of art.

Rii was exhausted when she went out of the bath.

"I... already don't have another choice anymore but to become Keika's wife..."

She murmured something like that.



The rain stopped when it became dusk.

Lapisia was spinning around while she spoke.

"I also worked hard today, so there'll be sausages! Sausages!"

"What have you worked so hard on?"

"The road, I turned it to stone! Now I want to eat sausages!"

"*Haa*?"

In a haste I checked it with "Clairvoyance".

Then, the road that leads from the village to the capital was completely paved.

I shout out loudly.

"What! What have you done!"

"...W-Was it bad, Keika?"

Lapisia shrank from anxiety.

I groaned with "*uun*" and was in thoughts.

At some point it certainly had to be made.

However, paving the road also brings dangers with it.

Since the convenience for transportation improves, it'll be easier for the Demon Lord's army to attack the capital. And the village's defenses are still far from complete.

-- This might cause some trouble if the capital notices it.

On the other hand, maybe I could use it for negotiations. I can hope for faster village development and an increase in believers.

"Hmm. You shouldn't have paved it on your own volition. The road can also be used by bad people after all. Always get my permission before using your power from now on."

"S-Sorry... Keika"

She looks like she's about to cry and clings to me.

I stroke her head to cast away her uneasiness.

"Even though you did it because you wanted to eat sausages, doing it for the sake of everyone isn't bad. You're a good girl. But be careful from now on."

"Yup... I'll become a good girl even more."

Her warm, slender body was lightly shivering. She seems to cry.

I gently stroked her head while whispering "alrighty, alrighty..."

However, the dinner consisted of all kinds of vegetables that she disliked.

She ate in silence while tears were floating in her golden eyes.

Chapter 93

Harvest Festival 1

(Betting fights)

It's a bright day in autumn.

Several cirrus clouds that look like they've been drawn with a brush are high up in the sky.

The cold air in the morning strains the cheeks and body.

The roads in the village were bustling from the morning.

Just today was a break from field work and building construction for the people to parade through the village.

Visitors from the nearby villages and the capital were arriving.

The inn was ready and flourishing.

Food stalls were called from the capital and peddlers had set up booths.

Grilled skewer, fried bean curd bread, grilled seafood. Fruit juice and alcohol. There were even booths that offered finger rings and accessories that looked like toys and lotteries.

Peddlers sold wares for daily life and a little expensive pottery and metal ware. It's also possible to barter with them.

The food at the stalls costs one or two small silver coins (100/200 yen), but each villager got ten wooden tickets with patterns on them beforehand so they wouldn't have to carry that much money with them. There were ten, so that they could freely enjoy the food stalls. They were like coupons.

Some villagers sold their coupons to travelers for half the price, but it was left to their own discretion and tolerated.

Different from their usual tattered clothes, many of the villagers wore gaudy, ornamented clothes. It seems that they had collected scraps of cloth and made them by hand.

Anyway, contrary to the usual, it was gorgeous.

I was accompanied by Celica, Minya and Lapisia.

We stopped at a food cart where skewers were roasted.

"How about it, sir? --I'll give you one extra."

"Should I get one? Celica, can you pay?"

I handed both the money and the food coupons to her.

"Yes, Keika-sama... I'll also get one."

Celica hands two coupons to the man at the stall.

"Here we go. Be careful not to injure yourself since it's freshly roasted."

"Thank you, very much"

I also received one.

Minya also got one.

Only Lapisia seemed to be distracted, had tightly grasped the wooden tickets and looked around restlessly.

When I take a bite, the fragrance of sweet sauce and grilled chicken spreads in my mouth.

The simple meat is completely covered with the rich sauce.

"Delicious."

"It's bittersweet and goes well with the tender meat-- *munch*"

Celica eats refined while hiding her mouth with her hand. She looks out of place since she's the only person who does it, so the eyes of the passing people were drawn to her.

The person in question didn't notice though.

Minya intently gazes at the skewer while moving her mouth.

"Fish sauce and honey, two kinds of vegetable flavors, also... alcohol?"

"Do you think you can make it?"

"A sweet alcohol is used. I don't know this taste. If I find this out, I can make it."

"It seems that the fermentation was stopped half-way to make it sweet like Mirin. This sauce seems to go well with a lot of dishes."

"Understand, I'll do my best."

Minya eats the rest. Then she went to buy another one, probably to further explore the taste.

Lapisia also got hooked and bought one.

They walked hand-in-hand while they were eating. They went looking at the shops around the place.

Only I and Celica remained.

I bought some Sake and grilled food, Celica bought juice and fried bean curd bread as we were enjoying the festival.

By the time we had finished eating, Celica suddenly stopped in front of a stall.

A cloth was spread out on the ground and various accessories were on top of it.

Celica's eyes are sparkling when she gazes at the accessories.

The storekeeper spoke while stroking his beard.

"Come close, come closer. Welcome. How about it, Wife-san, a wonderful necklace will surely nail your husband's eyes on you!"

"W-Wife..."

Celica's cheeks blushed. However, she starts to look through the things enthusiastically.

It's rare for Celica to get caught in sales talk. Well, it's fine since it's cheap.

I roughly looked through the things with "Truth Sight".

All of the stuff here is cheap--hm?

There was a ring with only one ability. It's a finger ring with a transparent blue stone. Fine ornaments are applied to it.

[Ring of Prayer] Recovers your emotional strength when you pray to god and temporarily raises your ability values.

I ask while I look at the gem on the ring that has the color as Celica's eyes.

"Old man, how much is this ring?"

"You've got good eyes, sir! This was sold by a famous noble house when it fell to ruin..."

"You don't have to boast about it. How much is it?"

"*ah, eh* ... it'll be two small gold coins."

I speak while I pick up the ring.

"Celica, please pay him."

"It seems overpriced though... yes, Keika-sama."

Celica took the coins out of the small bag that hung from her waist and paid.

The old man clanked the coins and made a broad smile.

"Thank you for the business!"

We leave the cheerful voice behind and left the stall.

Celica talks anxiously.

"Is that alright? I heard that it's normal to haggle at such stalls."

"I don't mind. This ring contains magic power. It was probably dirt cheap."

"Oh! Is that so? --By the way, what kind of magic power is it?"

--Come to think of it, the name of the god isn't specified.

"Let's see... It seems to recover you emotional strength and raise your ability values when you pray while thinking of me when I'm a Valor God."

"...eh!? It can't be, is this something like a Ring of Prayer!? That would be worth several holy gold coins..."

"Well, it was a bargain --Celica, stretch out your hand."

"Eh!?"

"I don't have a use for it. The most suitable for it is you."

I and Lapisia have so much magic power that it'd just corrode and Minya has less of a need for it.

"Ehm... but"

Celica look perplexed for some reason while I take her left hand and forcibly put the ring on her finger. I planned to put it on her little finger but because the ring was too big I put it on her ring finger.

"Don't lose it."

Celica's cheeks blushed red and she cast her eyes down.

"Of course, I'll treasure it, for my whole life... ehm, Keika-sama"

"Hm?"

"Thank you very much... I'll... stay by your side forever"

She hugged me after she said that. The soft roundness is pressed against me. For some reason she was smiling as if she'd sob.

"Ah, yes...? Treasure it from now on"

I didn't quite get it but hugged her tightly.

When I did this, a "*fumya*" leaked from her lips.

After that, I and Celica held hands and walked aimlessly around the festival.

Celica was smiling while her cheeks were blushed the whole time. Her hand emitted a gentle warmth.

After we had enjoyed the gorgeous atmosphere for a while, a young man shouted loudly from the roof of the mayor's house.

"Well then, you can now show the fields to the goddess's statue. First are the children!"

""*Waa~*""

The village's children are running to the courtyard of the mayors's house.

Lapisia comes running to me and speaks.

"Keika! Can I also go?"

"Sure, go. But, mimic the other children. And don't use your full strength."

"Yup!"

Lapisia nods with a bright smile and her white dress waves as she runs cheerfully, revealing her slender thighs.

The children lift the altar with the statue and go out to the fields.

It seems to be a ceremony to show the fields to the Mother Earth God Lupersia with the intention of "It's thanks to you that we could harvest that much."

They slowly marched along the fields and returned after one lap.

"Mother's statue, it's very beautiful!"

"Aren't you glad?"

"*ehehe~*"

She broadly smiled when I stroked her head. She seems to be happy that the mother is adored by everyone.

It's natural I guess.

After the children, it's the young men's and women's turn to carry the altar. They are lifting it up while their bodies are sticking to each other.

Maybe because of the influence of alcohol, voices of "*eek*" or "*yipe*" could be heard. They'll probably continue to talk deep into the night about their memories of the event they've all participated in.

Speaking of the Mother Earth God, she's a god of fertility.

When that was over, the man again shouted from the roof of the the mayor's house.

"Next is the harvest festival and Keika Village renaming event! The beastfolks will hold demonstration fights! You should bet on who'll win!"

Apparently there are also other fights apart from Minya vs. Mahal.

Minya turned her modest chest away and spoke with a composed face.

"Then, Keika-oniichan... until later."

"Give it your best--and don't forget the advertisement."

"Yes."

Minya's tail was standing straight as she walked with supple movements.

"I look forward to it."

When I said this, Celica worriedly frowned with her well shaped eyebrows.

"But, will Minya-chan really be okay?... Mahal has lived long and should be superior in fights."

"I believe in Minya. She'll definitely win."

"...is that so. You have to believe, right?"

"Don't worry about it too much. Minya has few experience but I've seen her fighting against stronger opponents, so I'll bet everything on her."

"Eh!?... Very well. I'll also believe."

The coins made a *clank* sound when Celica tightly grasped the bag with the money.

There was a special venue at the northern side of the village.

People are gathering around a square stage.

Everyone brought the food that they have bought at the stalls and they were eating and drinking.

A woman with a loud voice acted as announcer.

"Everyone who has come to the festival. Today we hold a fighting competition to celebrate the harvest and the renaming of Hero Keika Village! Who'll win, who'll lose!? Place your bets, the matches begin now! The first match is between the foxfolk Chando and the catfolk Anila!"

Chando is a skinny 18 years old youth with a pale face.

On the other side there's Anila with her healthy body trained by running.
The betting ratio is Chando 6 vs. Anila 3.

It seemed that a lot of people bet on Anila's victory.
An upper limit has been decided for bets.

I ask Celica.

"Did you bet on Chando?"

"Yes, just as you've told me to do... Anila-san looks stronger though..."

"People's strength is not determined by appearance."

It's a save bet because I had looked at him with "Truth Sight".

Chando has the same high level Magic Fighter job like Tilt.

kaan!

The opening bell resounds.

The people yelled with "*uooo!*"

The first one who moved was Anila.

She makes use of her fast legs and rushes forward. Her speed is faster than the wind.

"Nyaa!"

She exhales sharply and swings her arms. Her fingernails are bathing in the sunlight.

However, Chando bends with a *hyoi*.

But Anila flings up in pursuit.

It's the same as Minya's "Instantaneous Leg Power" skill which strengthens the legs to increase the speed and jumping power. She executes multiple attacks.

Her sharp nails and kicks are assaulting Chando.

However, Chando avoids them by a paper-thin margin.

Next, Chando is squaring off.

He casually makes a fist and reaches out at Anila's face.

"Got you nya!"

She grasps his hand and rotates the fist once.

She releases a kick to his pale face while drawing a large arc.

However, Chando bends his body while he raises his arm.

Anila's slender legs are in the sky.

Just like that, Chando threw Anila backwards.

"Nya!?"

Chando used magic for the first time against Anila who was in the sky.

""Gale Fist""

The distance between them is shortened in an instant and he unleashes his fist that is clad in wind.

Anila crosses her arms to receive it.

A dull sound echoed.

""*Kuuu!*"

Anila's face distorts from pain.

Furthermore, Chando's legs are cloning while they dance.

""Wind dance""

It can't be blocked by Anila, who's in the air.

While she desperately tries to deal with it with her hands, Chando runs his heel into Anila's stomach.

""*Gufu!* --Nyaaaaa!"

Anila is struck to the ground and stops moving.

The announcer declares in a loud voice.

"Winner, Chando! ~No~, Anila-san also fought great, but regrettably it wasn't enough. It was a great match. Everyone, applause~"

In between the interval of the clapping hands, screams of "I did it!" or "*uwaa*", this month's profits!" could be heard.

Chando bowed and left the stage while Anila was carried away on a stretcher.

By the way, Chando is the son of the fox tribe leader Mahal.

After waiting for some time, the announcer spoke.

"We continue with the cowfolk Sujata and the foxfolk Sara. It's a fight among women. Now, everyone, have you placed your bets?"

Sujita's body is plump and soft and Sara is slender and flexible. Their tails were bushy like writing brushes. Their eyes are shining brilliantly.

Sujita 4 vs. Sara 2.

It looked like Sara was popular because the first match was won by a foxfolk.

"Celica. Have you bet on Sujata?"

"Yes, of course."

She holds a wooden ticket and lets the bag with the coins clank.

The announcer shouts.

"No matter who wins or loses, there'll be only one match! So without further ado--start!"

With a *gong!*, the start signal rings and they are slowly walking about the stage.

Sujita's voluptuous breasts are swinging in large movements and Sara's tail is swinging like a brush from side to side while they are waiting for a chance.

The first one to move is Sujita.

With the horns at her forehead she's thrusting forward at her opponent.

Sara easily avoids her and unleashes her fists. She aims at Sujita's back.

However, Sujita suddenly turned around and caught Sara in between her breasts.

"*Na!*"

Sara can't pull the her fist out. She releases kicks because she can't separate from Sujita but can't land a decisive blow.

Sujita presses her whole plump body against Sara.

"*Waaa!*"

Sara rages violently under Sujita and becomes quiet after about a minute.

It's an easy victory.

While the crowd was making a stir, the announcer pulls herself together and shouts.

"Just what is this?! Sujita won without even using her hands and legs. Winner, Sujita!"

"*Waaa*", everyone is excited.

"I was right on the money!" "Those breast, amazing!" "*Uwaa! The family expenses...!"

Some guys are likely to lose their livelihood.

"Sujita was even stronger than I thought."

"I wonder, why wasn't she able to separate from her?"

"It seems to be a technique of body absorption. The opponent feels like he's stuck while he is wrapped. I guess this would be very effective against men in a brawl... It looks like you'd also be quite suited for it..."

When I speak while looking at Celica's big breasts, her cheeks are blushing and she hides them with her hands.

"I-If you want me to... should I try to learn it...?"

"You're not refuting it?"

Sara is carried away on a stretcher and the announcer shouts.

"Well then, it's time for today's main event! The leader of the foxfolks Mahal versus the member of the Hero Keika party Minya! I looks like a fight of an adult man against a girl, but who'll really win? Everyone, have you placed your bets!?"

"*Waaa!*", agitated by the announcer the people were shouting in excitement.

Minya's fight was about to begin.

Chapter 94

Harvest Festival 2

(Minya's fight)

It had cleared up and the blue sky could be seen.

We're in the middle of the harvest festival.

At the specially made venue at a vacant plot of land in the village, the fight of Minya and Mahal was about to begin.

The opponents are facing each other on the stage. They are surrounded by people who are watching the match.

Minya in her Miko clothes stood dignified and held her head high.

In contrast, Mahal had a leisure posture and had a smile floating on his face. One could feel his composure.

Mahal is one head taller.

"I don't have a hobby of hitting children... I wished you'd just accept your defeat..."

"It's alright. You're the one who'll go down after all."

"The rules don't allow the use of your favorite knives though."

"My bare fists are plenty for you. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to be useful to Keika-oniichan."

"Heh, to say that to me... it seems that you need some education."

Mahal frowned and glared at her.

The atmosphere on the stage is tense.

Minya was unarmed and couldn't use her two-sword-style, but it couldn't be helped. She has other skills that can be used for attacking.

[Status]

Name: Minya

Gender: Female

Age: 13

Race: Catfolk Race

Job: Kagura Sword Dance Miko (High Level)

Class: Dance Warrior Lv25 Thief Lv12 Cook Lv30

Attributes: "Calm Tempest"

Assignment: Hero Keika Party

[Skills]

Two Sword Style: Hold two weapons on both hands at once, attacking in free forms. Multiple attacks.

Instant Leg Power: Momentarily raises leg strength, increasing speed and jumping power. Multiple attacks.

Gale Thunder: Absolute preemptive strike. Chance that the opponent is perplexed by surprise.

God Speed Dance: Swift flying attack with god-like speed. Unavoidable attack.

[Dance Warrior Skills]

Dance: Dancing with elegant movements.

Fascinating Sword Dance: Attack while fascinating the opponent. The enemy's evasion rate sharply decreases.

Mysterious Dance: "Blurred"-effect and mental strength absorption.

Clear and Serene: Negates negative effects on yourself

She'll win as long as she isn't pulled into the opponent's pace.

The beastfolks were split in two groups and rooted for them. Foxfolks versus catfolks. The catfolks' cheers were louder because the first match was won by a foxfolk.

"Give your best!" "Win this time!" "I won't have any rice for seeding next year if you lose!" "You can win against something like a fox nyaa!"

One guy is betting his livelihood after all, huh. I'm glad that the mayor decided on an upper limit for bets.

The announcer shouts while confetti is thrown by the cheering people.

"Which side will win? How are the bets? --Then, the third match, Mahal versus Minya... begin!"

As if to affirm the announcer's words, Mahal moves first.

He creates ten clones at once. They are so perfect that even the dirt on his clothes is copied.

""Ooooh~""

The venue is noisy because of the sudden flashy technique.

I was impressed.

I mean, he was able to steal a march on Minya's preemptive skill "Gale Thunder".

He's not that agile. He made this move exactly because he knows that the catfolks' swift attacks are their forte. It shows the difference in experience.

--Mahal is confident and strong.

The announcer shouts.

"Oooh, Mahal made a sudden bold move! He has created twenty clones!"

--twenty?"

I concentrate on my eyes but can only see ten.

Celica nods beside me.

"Yes, there should be twenty."

I looked at Mahal with "Truth Sight".

[Status]

Name: Mahal

Gender: Male

Age: 44

Race: Mythical foxfolk

Job: Foxfolk Leader

Class: Illusionist Lv 44, Mage Lv 25

Attributes: "Wind" "Water"

[Skills]

Vital Spot Attack

Gale Fist

Ripple Dance

Magical Enchantment

Slash Tornado

Illusion: Fascinates the opponent and lets him see clones.

Mirage Avatar: Uses heat haze to create clones.

Double Split: Creates body parts with a mass for simultaneous attacks.

[Inherent Skills]

Mythical Fox Transformation: Transform into the mythical nine tailed fox and wield its power.

[Mage Skills]

According to Lv 25

Heh. Did he activate Illusion and Mirage Avatar simultaneously?

Illusion doesn't work on me, that's why I only see ten.

This might be a hard fight for Minya.

--Then.

Minya, who should see twenty clones in front of her, makes a strange move.

She suddenly brings her fist to her mouth and strongly bites her index finger.

Red blood flows.

It seems that the pain cancels the fascination.

Good judgement. Is it thanks to "Clear and Serene" that she's so calm?

The Mahals speak, moving their mouths in succession. Probably to conceal the real body.

"You don't seem to be surprised by the clones" "Let me compliment you" "...but, there are still ten"

Minya answers without delay.

"My victory... has been decided"

""Heh. Then, let me show you my skills!""

The Mahals moved all at once.

On the other side, Minya is holding up her fists with her eyes closed.

She's deeply in concentration.

The Mahals are striking all at once.

""You think you can avoid this with your eyes closed!?"""

He attacks Minya with kicks and punches like a storm.

Minya is hit without her making any movements.

--*shuutsu!*

Minya's hand moves so fast that it leaves afterimages behind.

doga!

Minya's face is hit by Mahal's downward swing.

She was slapped onto the floor of the stage by the force.

"*ku!*"

She quickly stands up and takes a distance while the blood is dripping from the corner of her mouth.

Mahal throws his head back.

There's a trace of Minya's fist is on his face.

His slit eyes are wide open from astonishment.

"Does this mean that you've seen through my attack!?"

Minya speaks while she wipes the blood from her mouth

"You're wrong. I knew it because you've moved through the confetti. Since the clones

don't have a physical body, I should just hit back when I'm attacked by the real one."

"...Good judgement, at least I'd like to say that, but it's a poor move. You've taken a lot of damage. If I repeat this three times it'll be my victory."

"It's alright. There won't be a next time."

"Heh. Will you still say the same after you've seen this? --'Magical Enchant'"

Mahal invokes magic and all hands including those of the clones are glowing white. The fists are clad in wind.

--Did he invoke "Gale Fist" on all clones and himself?!

The Mahals shout all at once.

""""This is the fina--!""""

donn!, Minya kicks the floor.

She moved forward before Mahal was done speaking.

Is this her newly acquired "God Speed Dance"-skill? A swift flying attack with god-like speed. An unavoidable attack.

Her supple movement is like a cat that is aiming at its prey.

Her black hair flutters backward as she dashes forward on the stage.

""""Wh-What!?"""""

The Mahals are attacking, but Minya nimbly evades them, changing between fast and slow speeds.

It's like an elegant offering dance.

However, if she attacks a clone, that gap will be used for a counterattack. She has to hit the real one with certainty--.

Then, for some reason, Minya is aiming at only one person.

She acts as if the other 9 Mahals wouldn't be there. She's so fast that the contour of her body is blurred.

-- No, she has invoked "Mysterious Dance", which has the same effect as the "Blurred"-

skill.

Mahal's fists and kicks don't reach her.

On the other hand, Minya chases only one person from among the clones.

"--This is the end."

zunn!

One heavy blow with her left fist struck the real Mahal in the stomach. His hair is swaying from the impact.

"*guha!*"

Mahal pitches forward but the right fist is already striking his chin.

ga!, with a dull sound, Mahal is bending backwards and his posture is lost.

But the ruthless attacks won't stop.

She further attacks with the consecutive skill "Instant Leg Power"!

She danced in the air and the white sleeves and black shirt were turned up.

Her supple legs rotate like whips and the back of Mahal's head is hit.

gong!

A dull sound echoes through the venue.

The audience falls silent.

Minya stopped in a high kick pose. Her violently whirling straight black hair returns to its original state.

Then, Mahal collapsed slowly onto the stage.

Minya puts her thin leg down and arranges her disordered Miko clothes.

The announcer is the first one to regain her composure while looking at the scene.

"The outcome is clear! Winner, Minya! Minya from the Hero Keika party defeated the foxfolk Mahal! --Wh-What an exchange of techniques! I've never even seen a fight like this at the Colosseum in the capital! It was an amazing fight! Everyone, give a big applause!"

To the announcer's declaration, the voices of the people in the venue finally erupted.

"*Uoo!*". Astonishment, congratulations and respect are mixed in the cheers.

"Amazing!" "What a technique!" "If that's a party member of the hero... then the hero is..." "My heart is throbbing, Minya-chan, please marry me!" "Thank god, with this I can buy the seed rice for next year!"

It looks like the man who bet his livelihood has been saved.

Also, Minya is my Miko. I won't anyone else let have her.

The beastfolks are also making noise. The eyes of the foxfolks and catfolks are sparkling.

"Amazing!" "To defeat the leader!" ""Minya-san, you're great nya!" "I fell in love with your strength!" "Please let me call you Minya-sama nya!"

She seems to have gained the trust from all the beastfolks.

Then, Mahal regained his consciousness while groaning "*Uu... *".

"...I've lost?... why, was I seen through? --Cat girl, I'd like to ask one thing. Was my technique not perfect...?"

"No. It was perfect. But I marked you."

"A mark!? I can't be! My clones should reflect all injuries and dirt in real time!"

Minya nodded slowly.

"I know. But it can't copy the smell. I know the smell of my own blood. --I'm a catfolk after all."

She put pride into the words of her being a beastfolk when she spoke. She proudly presented her small chest. That attitude was unthinkable for her when I first met her.

"The smell of blood---!? Are you saying, that you already planned to use the smell to judge the real one at the time when you bit your finger!?"

"That's right. That's why I said that my victory has been decided. The only reason why I bit my finger was to break your technique.

Mahal open his eyes and looked up at Minya, but then crestfallen drooped his shoulders and threw himself down on the floor.

"...It's my complete defeat. I can't see me winning no matter how many times I'd try... I'm sorry to have made light of you. It was my mistake, I'm sorry. I'll apologize to Keika-sama next."

"Yep, it's fine of you get it-- I, who was made strong by Keika-oniichan, won't lose to anyone."

Then, Minya went to the center of the stage and took a small bag out of her pocket.

It's one of the talismans that I had asked Fal to make.

She looks over the audience while she holds it up to the sky. All attention was focused on her.

"It's thanks to this talisman that I got strong! It received Hero Keika's divine protection. It also has the affect of warding off weak demons. You should buy it if you want to travel safely!"

""""*Oooooo!*""""

Since it was said by a companion of the hero after she made a display of her strength, the venue became extraordinarily hyped up. An uproar started with words like "I want one!" or "I'll buy!".

I was pleased and desperately tried to conceal my smile.

Just as planned!

--The people who buy it won't forget my name, whether they like it or not. And when they later receive some blessings I can get more believers!

At that time, Fal came rushing to the venue. Her brown hair is disheveled and her habit flutters.

She put down a portable selling stand that hung from her shoulder on a string.

"Everyone at the venue! Here you can get Hero Keika Talismans! It's usually three large silver coins, but only today you'll get it for 6 small silver coins! It's only one per person~... *hya!*"

The spectators are surging forward.

"Give me one!" "Don't limit it to one and sell me three" "*Wa!* There's no doubt if it's told by a Miko that serves the Ocean God!"

It's thriving.

Celica looked astonished when she saw that scene.

"No way, you thought about using even the fight to sell your name!?"

"That's right, Celica. I wouldn't let her do something as dangerous as fighting unless it's for my sake."

That's right. The effect would've been weak if a hero had won a fight. It's natural for the hero to win after all.

But giving some actual proof that the companion of the hero became strong through the talisman gives the talisman authenticity.

Moreover, it looked like Minya won by ordinary hitting and kicking while Mahal used magic.

A frail little girl that wins against a magic using adult with simple strikes. That's an unbelievable event.

On an emotional level, it won't be strange if they'd think that it's thanks to the hero's blessings. People will forcibly convince themselves to make it plausible when they see unbelievable things.

Well, if they'd look closely, they'd see that the talisman that Minya holds is brand-new like the items for sale. That's why Minya stands in the center of the stage, a little away from the crowd.

Fal is surrounded by many people and looks distressed.

"Celica, please help her."

"Yes, Keika-sama."

Her blond hair swayed when she gallantly ran.

"Hey-, sell me quickly-!" "Give me a talisman!"

"Everyone, there are still many talismans available. They won't run away, so please wait in line!"

A dignified voice suppressed the tumult. The heated atmosphere in the surroundings was swallowed by Celica's princess skill "Intimidation".

The unrest of the group quiets down a little.

After that Fal and Celica are exchanging money.

"We also sell the talismans at Keika-sama's residence, so please come by at any time."

Adding these words was also not forgotten.

Minya went down the stage and came to my side in a corner of the vicinity.

"Keika-oniichan, was that good?"

"Yes, it was a good performance. I'm sorry that I made you fight, Minya."

Minya put her arms around me and hugged me when I stroked her head.

The muscles in her slender body are swelling. Her smooth skin is slightly wet from sweat. The scent of flowers is tickling my nose.

"I'm happy just to be able to become your strength, Keika-oniichan. Everything of me belongs to you."

"Is that so... thank you"

Mahal approached while being supported by a young foxfolk.

"I'd like to withdraw all my previous remarks of contempt. I'm terribly sorry."

"It's alright. Don't worry about it. Let's get along in the future."

"Yes, I'll give my best for you."

I and Mahal shook hands.

He speaks to Minya, who's standing beside me.

"Please forgive me."

"Yup. No problem. Let's get along from now on."

"Yes, likewise, young catfolk Miko."

He exchanged greetings with Minya and left.

"It seems that everything went smoothly. I'll keep relying on you."

"Yup."

She nodded and behaved like a cat when she rubbed her face against my chest.

Her ears and tail were wagging joyfully.

Chapter 95

Harvest Festival 3

(Arc 4 Epilogue)

The harvest festival at Keika Village is still ongoing.

The last event of the festival was held at night.

Bonfires were set up here and there along the roads and they were burning grandly.

Lots of buckets filled with water have been put up and the red light was reflecting in them.

Then, dry straw was spread out on the harvested fields.

The mayor speaks with a hoarse voice.

"This year, when this became the Hero Keika Village, we had a good harvest. This is also thanks to Lupersia-sama. Let's give our gratitude so we'll have a good harvest next year as well -- Start!"

Along with the signal the fields were set ablaze.

The fire spreads because of the straw and turns the fields into a sea of fire.

The men who are carrying Lupersia's altar are walking along the road between the fields with the fires.

The red flames let the white marble of the goddess's statue sparkle.

It was quite a fantastic scenery.

We had blended in with the villagers and were watching as well.

Celica stands beside me and speaks.

"This is a superb sight, huh."

"Yeah. And there's also a practical reason."

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"By burning the fields, you can erase insects, fungi and weed sprouts, which will lead to a good harvest next year."

"Oh, is that so?"

"The practical reason has disappeared into the nonchalant festival ceremony. In this way it'll be passed down to the generations to come."

"...people are, wonderful."

Celica leaked a voice a admiration together with a sigh.

Then the ceremony ended and the goddess's statue was brought back to the courtyard of the mayor's house.

The mayor speaks to the gathered villagers.

"With this the festival is over. However, there's still lots of alcohol and food, so today you can make merry all night."

"*Waaa*". Cheers of joy are raised.

Then, the people restarted to drink and enjoy themselves.

--The time should be right.

Let's give this the finishing touch to gather believers.

It'll also be some good practice.

I approached the goddess's statue.

"Mayor, can I take a look at the statue?"

"Ah, yes. Please, Keika-sama."

The mayor stepped back.

I put my hand on the goddess's statue. It's a beautiful stone statue with a compassionate smile.

--Lupersia, are you there? You should be awake on the day of the harvest festival, right?

"...snore~"

--You seem to be awake, huh. Lapisia wants to see you.

"...!"

A smile was floating on the corners of my lips when I cast a spell.

"Oh earth goddess Lupersia, respond to my call and show yourself-- 'Earth God Descent'"

My magic power is sucked up with a fierce force and Lupersia's statue begins to glow yellow.

The villagers are starting to make a fuss.

"Eh?" "The statue is...!" "Ooh... it responded to the hero's call..."

And then, in the night when the bonfires were burning, the goddess's statue was engulfed in a divine light and raised her head.

She lowered her hands that were put together in front of her chest, turned to me and smiled. It was a much more dazzling smile than when she was only a stone statue.

"...it's been a while Keika-san"

"Yeah, you seem a lot better now."

"Thanks to you I was able to sleep with a peace of mind."

The villagers were noisy due to the unbelievable scene in front of them.

The mayor, who's close, falls on his backside out of surprise.

"I called for you today because I thought that you might want to see your daughter since it's been a while."

"Lapisia seems to be doing fine, huh."

"Heey, Lapisia"

"Ye-Yep!"

Before I realized, Lapisia had run to my side with the "Create Hammer" on her back.

Her mother bent slightly down and stroked her head.

"You look well, Lapisia. Have you been a good girl?"

"*Uu*... Mother"

Lapisia looked up at me with self-confidence.

I answered with a wry smile.

"She was a very good girl. About 200 million times more useful than Lilille."

"Is that so, you've been a good girl, haven't you, Lapisia. You've worked hard..."

"*ehehe~*, thank you, mother."

Lapisia's cheeks blushed and she shyly cast her eyes down when her head was patted. Even though she looked flustered, she seemed to smile from the bottom of her heart.

Lupersia raises her head and looks up at me.

"So, that's not the only reason why you've called me today, right?"

"Hm--, I wanted to ask about Vanus and stuff, but... frankly speaking, this is more tiring than expected."

My magic power continues to decrease.

It seems that she still can't maintain her form by herself.

"*giggle*, so that's your answer? Well, I might be of some help if you keep it up a little longer."

"...you've seen through me after all, huh."

Suddenly Lapisia raised her voice.

"Mother, this!"

She takes the "Create Hammer" from her back and presents it.

Her mother tilts her head and receives it.

"Is there anything with it?"

Furthermore, Lapisia removes the ring from her finger and hands it over.

It doesn't have any effects, it's just an ordinary ring.

"Please!"

"Ah, I see. --Let's do it together."

An affectionate smile is floating on Lupersia's face as she puts the ring on the ground. Then she let Lapisia hold the hammer and supported her hands.

"Pour power from the handle to the tip as if you'd pour water in a bowl and then gently hit."

"I'll do my best!"

The hammer that's being held by them glows yellow from magic power.

My face becomes pale and I'm staggering, but I endure it.

--*Woah!* The magic power is pouring into Lupersia like a blood transfusion and my magic power is violently sucked up!... At this rate I won't last even five minutes!

They slowly swung the hammer down. It hits the ring and a *gotsun* resounded.

The ring starts to glow yellow.

"You did well. Remember that feeling."

"Yep! Mother!"

Lapisia tightly grasps the ring and she's so happy that her golden eyes are getting wet.

I looked at the ring with "Truth Sight".

[Earth Ring] Magic Power x3, Exclusive equipment for Lapisia.

By the way, Lilille had the exclusive ring "Tidal Wave Ring" equipped, which tripled her magic power.

"Lapisia's ring was incomplete, huh."

--Certainly, it was a little strange that a god's child had an ordinary ring.

"Yes, things went suddenly haywire after all. Taking my time has backfired."

"I guess it's no wonder that she wanted the hammer. Well done, Lapisia."

"*ehehe*"

Lapisia's young face slackened when her head was patted by me and Lupersia.

At that time, Lupersia's beautiful contour flickered a little.

"Hm? Are you alright?"

"Yes... it was short, but it's time..."

Lapisia caught her breath to Lupersia's words.

"Do you have to go already...?"

"I'm always there, Lapisia. I'm the earth itself after all."

"...Yup. Understood."

"Good girl, Lapisia. Please keep listening to Keika-san and work hard for the sake of the world. --I'll probably be healed in about a year"

"Really!? I'll work hard! I'll work hard and be a good child!"

Lapisia clutched her small fist and spoke with determination. There were lots of tears in her big eyes.

"Please take care of her."

"That wish, I heard it."

"*Hehe*. Those words are more reliable than Lilille."

Her beautiful face distorted as she laughed like a mischievous child.

--Just how low is your reputation, Lilille?

Lupersia separated from us and stepped towards the villagers.

"In my name of Lupersia. I bless this village and Hero Keika!"

For a moment the surroundings were dyed in a bright light as if fireworks went off.

The light fades away and Lupersia turns back into a stone statue.

The quiet courtyard gradually became noisy.

"It's the goddess" "It's the real goddess!" "This village and Keika-sama were blessed"

"It's thanks to Hero-sama"

Exclamations of worship towards me were mixed into the people's voices.

It doesn't feel bad. Lupersia has left a big present behind.

The people had received the assurance that Hero Keika is worthy of their prayers.

Well, of course I wanted to let Lapisia meet her mother, but I thought that the descend of a god would also increase my believers.

Lupersia easily saw through my ulterior motive and splendidly supported me by giving her blessings.

Am I in her debt now? --No, I take care of Lapisia after all.

Then Lapisia put her thin arms around me and hugged me.

"Keika, thank you. Thank you for letting me see mother."

"Aren't you glad?"

"Keika, amazing. Keika, love. Really, really, thank you"

Finally she began to burst into tears from her big eyes.

I'm quite pleased with how it turned out.

The power of the earth was the strongest during the harvest festival and I thought that she might come if I'd call out to her for Lapisia's sake.

-- I'm glad that I did it.

"Well, it's time for children to go to bed. Let's go home."

"Yup! Keika!"

Lapisia wiped her tears, smiled and took my hand when I began to walk.

Celica and Minya followed quietly behind.

We left the crowded center of the village and headed to the residence. A large plot surrounded by a hedge.

I stopped in front of the entrance.

Lapisia tilts her head.

"What's wrong, Keika?"

"-- There are three people behind the hedge."

"Eh?"

Celica and Minya suddenly went into battle mode.

Lapisia also separates her hand and takes a fighting pose.

Then, there was a rustling sound and three men wearing robes appeared. They were standing there in silence.

I casually speak.

"It's been a while, Leo."

"You've noticed? As expected of you."

A cold and clear voice resounded and the man in front took off his robe.

His blue hair flutters in the night wind.

--Even though he hid himself, I knew who it was at a glance thanks to "Truth Sight".

"Huh? What's up with those masks? Are you going to a masked-ball?"

They were wearing masks that only hid their eyes.

Leo giggled happily.

"That's, a secret for now. Rather than that, we've brought information, Keika."

"What is it?"

"--We've found an egg."

"Well done. Where is it?"

"It seems to be in the possession of a demon called Hell King in the wetlands in the southeast. He's an extremely strong vampire with more than 3000 subordinates."

"It's the guy you've talked about the other day, huh. Shouldn't the king make him an extermination target if he's that strong?"

Dark speaks while he pushes up his mask-shaped glasses.

"Maybe, but that Hell King and his subordinates are hiding from the people and are also not a part of the Demon Lord's army. That's why it was extremely hard to gather information."

"He's not a part of the army?"

It's said that even the Demon Lord turns a blind eye to him.

He seems to be quite the big shot.

"Very well. I'd be uneasy if you'd go. We'll take over."

"Thank you, Keika-san."

Leo lowered his head sincerely.

I nodded once when I heard his heartfelt request.

--I'm done with everything I wanted to do at the village. It might be time for some traveling.

While I was in thoughts, Celica snuggled up to me to support me.

Did she know what I wanted without me having to say anything?

"Well, please tell me the details at the mansion."

"Yes, understood."

I walked while holding hands with Celica. Leo followed behind us.



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